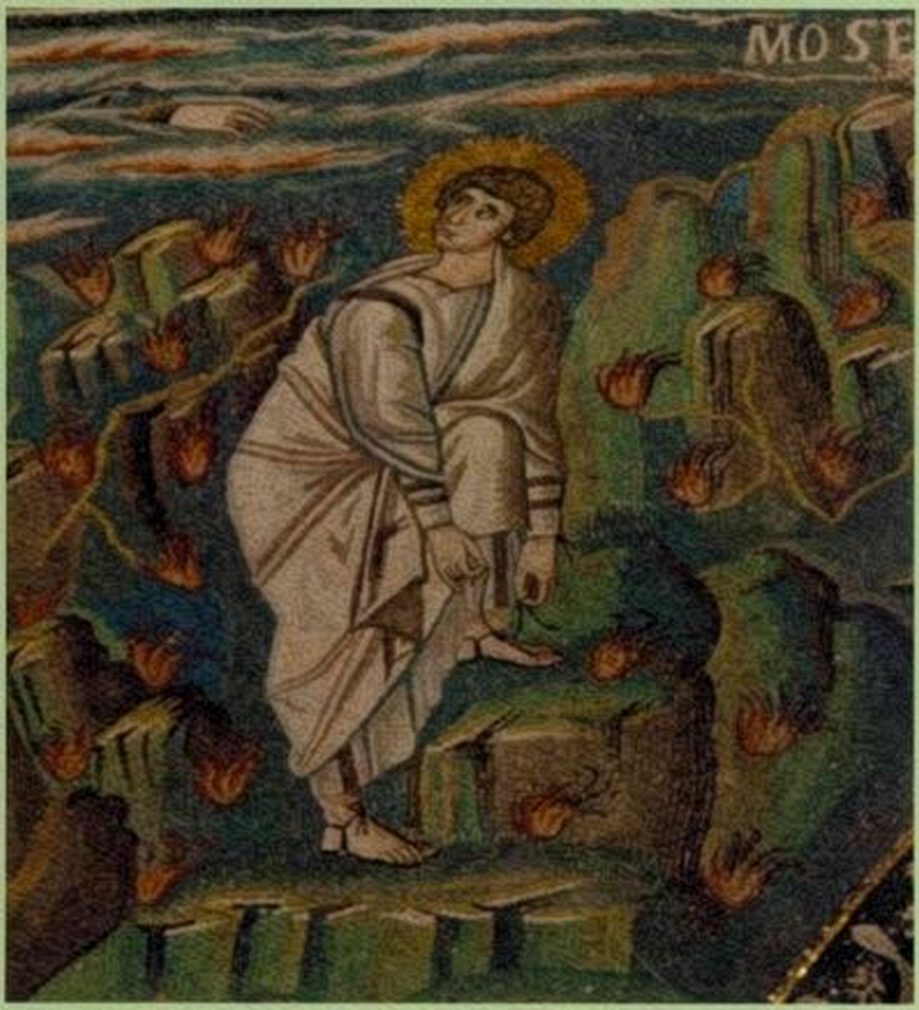
The Other Face of God

'I Am That I Am' Reconsidered



Cornelis den Hertog

The Other Face of God

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The Other Face of God

'I Am That I Am' Reconsidered

Cornelis den Hertog

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Preface

The various studies in this book revolve around the enigmatic divine answer in Exod. 3.14a: 'I am who I am' or 'I will be who I will be', according to current translations. This statement is a classic text in theology regarding the question of who or what God is. In the history of theology the divine statement was understood mostly in a highly philosophical way: it would point to God as true, absolute being. This view has changed, but this has not resulted in a new consensus on its interpretation. On the contrary, the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a is one of the most debated passages of the Hebrew Bible. The discussion of it mainly concerns, however, only a few alternatives, such as the question whether it has a present or a future sense, or whether it expresses God's presence or his hiddenness.

The aim of this book is to advance our understanding of the divine statement by reviewing in a thorough way the sources of its understanding: first of all, the original Hebrew text and the context of the narrative of the call of Moses, but also supposed echoes of it in the biblical text (notably Hos. 1.9 and Rev. 1.4, 8), the rendering of the Septuagint, the interpretation by Philo of Alexandria (as an influential interpreter of this translation), the daughter versions, the Vulgate, and the early modern translations. The translations are important as primary interpretations that shaped our understanding of the statement in one way or another (among other things by opposing the supposed meaning of their renderings) but also as far as they show differences in understanding. Finally, an unconventional approach to the statement and its context is attempted by reading it psychoanalytically.

The various investigations have resulted in many new findings. The different chapters of this book describe them. An outline of these chapters will now be given.

Chapter 1 starts with a verse in the immediate context of the divine statement: Exod. 3.12. The sign given there to Moses, the serving of God by the people on the mountain, is surprising in that it apparently takes place after the execution of his commissioning: how can such a sign ever encourage Moses? The issue will lead to a fresh study of many other signs (including the famous, also heavily debated, Immanuel sign of Isa. 7.14) and of recognition sayings as comparable phenomena. Finally, the relation of the sign to the narrative is investigated in detail. What appears to be crucial is that

by the sign Yhwh indicates what matters to him most profoundly. With this reversal of perspective, the sign paves the way for the next verses, 3.13-15.

In Chapter 2, the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a is studied in detail within its original Hebrew text. The chapter aims at specifying in a systematic way all the factors in the text that may determine its meaning. First, the context of the divine statement and in particular that of the preceding question of Moses are examined. Among other things, this leads to an investigation of the divine names and the way they function. The request for the divine name appears primarily to be a question of the legitimacy of Moses' sending: no one was ever sent before by the ancestral god with a message to other people. Subsequently, the syntax of the divine statement (including the tense, aspect and modality of the verb form) and its nature as answer are discussed. In the end the statement appears to be a comment on Moses' question, making clear that God exceeds the representations of the people and as such can do unexpected things, such as sending Moses. In my view, the divine statement is therefore intrinsically connected with the central issue of the narrative, the 'call', the commissioning of Moses.

It is often alleged that the statement of Exod. 3.14a has influenced other biblical verses. In particular Hos. 1.9 is conceived in this way. Translated as 'I am not your Ehye / your I-am', it would contain an invalidation of the divine statement. This would imply that this verse suggests something about how Exod. 3.14 should be interpreted. This interpretation of Hos. 1.9 is challenged in Chapter 3 on the basis of grammar and other points of view. Departing from them, another, more probable interpretation is developed: Yhwh indicates 'only' that his special relationship with Israel is finished. Finally, the question is considered how Hos. 1.9 and Exod. 3.14, belonging to different parts of the Hebrew Bible, can correctly be related to each other.

Chapter 4 investigates the influential translation of the statement of Exod. 3.14 in the Old Greek version, the Septuagint. According to many authors, the rendering 'I am the one being' would refer to the true, unchanging nature of God. This metaphysical interpretation is best illustrated by Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish philosopher who had such a big impact on the development of Christian theology. This conception is questioned from different points of view, such as syntax, translation difficulties, history of ideas and earliest reception history (including Rev. 1.4, 8), but in particular from the theology of the translator, as evidenced by his translation practice in Exodus. Within the context reconstructed on the last basis, the meaning of the Septuagint translation of Exod. 3.14a appears in the end to correspond to many modern interpretations with their emphasis on God's presence. In connection with remarks of Paul Ricoeur about Exod. 3.14 it is finally asked to what extent a metaphysical interpretation of this verse may yet be justified.

Being the oldest translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint has exercised a considerable influence on other translations. In the first part of Chapter 5, the translations of Exod. 3.14 are examined as they are found in the various daughter translations, but also its rendering in the Vulgate. It results in an interesting picture of how the various languages, given their properties, handled the divine statement but, in the case of a freer translation, also of indications of how Exod. 3.14 has been interpreted. The latter cases illustrate that Exod. 3.14a in the Septuagint leads to interpreting God as a matter of being in one sense or another: the Armenian version points to a real, vital divine being; the Arabic translation, to an eternal being. In the last part of the chapter attention is paid to Western European mediaeval translations and also to Protestant translations in the early modern age. The crucial question in connection with the latter translations is whether they meant a shift with regard to the traditional interpretation of Exod. 3.14 connected with the Septuagint and the Vulgate. This seems indeed the case since the statement is understood more or less clearly as a reference of God back to himself.

In Chapter 6, the entire narrative of the call of Moses is read in a psychoanalytical way. The acquisition of a certain knowledge of psychoanalysis, especially that of Lacan, belongs to the particulars of my life story. My first question was, Where will the application of psychoanalytical theory to this narrative lead? From the beginning it was realized that a simple application of such a theory could misrepresent the story. This concern will be found back in the chapter. On the other hand, it was also soon suspected that a psychoanalytical reading may contribute to a better understanding of the narrative. Such a reading inherently leads to a functional interpretation of all relationships within the story, and this may suspend too hasty theological judgments. From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the divine statement refers to the irruption of an 'I' from nowhere, from beyond usual thought and expectation. Yhwh-God presents himself therefore as a subject, one that calls forth other subjects, by appealing to Moses. It is this simple 'mechanism' that has far-reaching consequences. It undoes the impotency of an old ancestral belief in the current situation reinterpreting it. It overrules the mirroring by Moses in Pharaoh, the powerful representative of the existing situation and also the one who is most interested in its maintenance. At the same time, a promising new future is indicated beyond this situation.

The various chapters are in general thorough rewritings of articles already published as sequels to my doctoral dissertation about Exod. 2.23–4.17; only Chapter 5 is completely new. During the process of writing this book, the work on one chapter had a fruitful influence on that of the others. On the one hand, the subject of each chapter forced me to handle the matter according to a logic different from that in others. But on the other hand, it was just the difference in results of the chapters that led me not to be content with

them too quickly, and therefore to reading and analyzing the texts again and again. For instance, the study of different versions made me more aware of the distinct ways the sentence construction of the divine statement is perceived according to different languages, including Hebrew. The weight attributed to the use of the first person in the divine statement in psychoanalytical considerations (Chapter 6) also brought me to a closer analysis of its function in the call narrative (Chapter 2). Some cross-references too testify to the fruitful interaction of working on the different chapters. However, although the individual chapters are orientated differently, it should also be noted that they have a certain linguistic concern in common. The importance of it may be obvious: Linguistics is one of the better means to bring more objectivity in the approach to an ancient sacred text. Nevertheless, as will become clear, also in such an approach problems are met, even fundamental problems, which require a solution.

Since the present book concerns the very heart of theology, it may appeal not only to biblical scholars but also to many other readers. In this respect, some investigations, such as syntactical ones, may cause difficulties. However, it is always possible to skip them and confine oneself to the conclusions drawn from these investigations! With the realization of the importance of the contents for a wider public, all efforts are made to make the book as accessible as possible and, in the case of technical, syntactical considerations, to make their point clear.

Acknowledgments

I have many reasons to be grateful. The publishers of articles appearing in a revised form in this book gave permission to reuse them in a new publication. This applies to Boekencentrum (publisher of *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 1999; see Chapter 4); the Catholic Biblical Association of America (*Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 2002; see Chapter 2); Karnac Books (*Journal for Lacanian Studies* 2006; see Chapter 6); and Shaker Publishing (*Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities* 1999 [no. 17], and *Festschrift* for K.A. Deurloo, 2001; see Chapters 3 and 1 respectively). I am also grateful for the confidence and support shown by Sheffield Phoenix Press in relation to the project that resulted in the present book. Many libraries gave me technical support, from Groningen and Kampen to Leuven and Paris. The hospitality of the Faculty of Theology of the VU University Amsterdam should especially be mentioned. They allowed me to make use of their computer facilities (such as their homegrown product *Quest*, the precursor of the *Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible*). The comments of some friends on previous versions of Chapters 2 and 6 led to several clarifying changes in these chapters. Some people provided me essential material for my investigations: Dr Kåre Fuglseth, a tool for the

study of Philo (see Chapter 4, sec. 1); Dr Xavier-Laurent Salvador, French mediaeval text material (see Chapter 5, sec. 3). It is especially obvious from Chapter 5 that the support of others was indispensable. My interest in various ancient versions led me far beyond my linguistic and literary-historical capacities; this chapter could therefore not have been written without the advice of specialists in the fields concerned. In addition to the linguistic aid of my former teacher of Islam at the University of Amsterdam, Dr Kees Wagtendonk, the help of Prof. Dr G. Freidhof, Prof. Dr J.P. Monferrer Sala, Dr W.Th. van Peursen, Prof. Dr F.J. Thomson, Prof. Dr J.J.S. Weitenberg and Prof. Dr B.L. Zekiyan should be mentioned. Their contributions will be specified in the sections concerned, but already here I would like to express my gratitude to them. Finally, I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewer of the publishing house, who took pains to correct instances of unidiomatic English and other irregularities in the manuscript. These thanks certainly also apply to the typesetter of this book. Together with the persons mentioned I would like to honour all the people who contributed to the improvement of the text of the earlier published versions of certain chapters. Of course, everything written in this book, including persisting errors, remains my own responsibility.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of Periodicals, Series, and (Multivolume) Works

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AAWG.PH	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse
AB	Anchor Bible
ACEBT	*Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en bijbelse Theologie;* from no. 17 (1999) called *Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities*
ACEBT.Sup	Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities—Supplement Series
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATS	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBC	Blackwell Bible Commentaries
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BibIntS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibLitS	Bible and Literature Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
BK	*Bibel und Kirche*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BRMT	Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology

BTT	Bible de tous les temps
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BzS	Beiträge zur Slavistik
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBSC	The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CJAn	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament
COr	Cahiers d'Orientalismes
COT	Commentaar op het Oude Testament
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium.
CSSN	Corpus Sacrae Scripturae Neerlandicae medii aevi
DCH	David J.A. Clines (ed.), *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–)
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature: Yearbook
EHS	Europäische Hochschulschriften
ELO	Elementa linguarum Orientis
EncUniv	Encyclopédie universitaire
EPhM	Études de philosophie médiévale
EtB	Études bibliques
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FGS	Functional Grammar series
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
FoundLang.Sup	Foundations in Language, Supplemental Series
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCAL	Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, I.1 *Bibelübersetzungen* (Vatican City: Bibliotheca apostolica Vaticana, 1944)
GHK	Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
GKC	Wilhelm Gesenius and E. Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar* (trans. and ed. A.E. Cowley; London, 2nd English edn, 1910)
HALOT	Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. and ed. M.E.J. Richardson; 5 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1994-2000)
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*

HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBI	Heritage of Biblical Israel
HCMR	History of Christian-Muslim Relations
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSchAT	Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testamentes
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IJST	*International Journal of Systematic Theology*
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* (Columbia University)
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwestern Semitic Languages*
JOTT	*Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics*
JQRSup	Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJS	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEH	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
Kusatu	*Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*
KVHS	Korte verklaring der Heilige Schrift
LA	Linguistik Aktuell (Linguistics Today)
LASBF	*Liber Annuus* (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum)
LCBI	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation

LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio divina
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LOS	London Oriental Series
MAeM	Medium Aevum Monographs
MBPF	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
MGWJ	*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judent*[*h*]*ums*
MLS	Monumenta linguae slavicae dialecti veteris
MPIL	Monographs of the Peshitta Institute Leiden
MSB	Müncher Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft, Beiheft
MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
NAC	The New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	Neue Echter Bibel
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	W.A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997)
NTT	Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën (until vol. 24, 1986, a periodical; after that the title of a book series; from vol. XLVII, 2003 also called Old Testament Studies)
OTWSA	Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, Papers Read at the . . . Meeting
PhA	Philosophia antiqua
PLO	Porta linguarum orientalum
PO	Patrologia orientalis
POT	(Dutch series) De prediking van het Oude Testament; (American series) Princeton Oriental Texts
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
RB	*Revue biblique* (until vol. 23, 1914, called *Revue biblique internationale*)
RhWAW.G	Vorträge / Rheinish-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Geisteswissenschaften
RPT	Religion in Philosophy and Theology
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments

SBi	Sources bibliques
SBLDiss	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SESJ	Suomen Elsegeettisen Seuran ulkaisa: Publications de la Société d'Exégèse de Finlande / Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
SGG	Studies in Generative Grammar
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SHJ	Studies in Hellenistic Judaism—Supplements to Studia Philonica
SIGC	Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums
SPIB	Scripta pontificii Instituti biblici
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
Subs	Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium. Subsidia
SVigChr	Supplements to Vigilae christianae
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigraphica
TB	Torch Bible Commentaries
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
TDOT	G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (trans. J.T. Willis *et al.*; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–)
TEG	Traditio exegetica graeca
ThB	Theologische Bücherei
ThSt	Theologische Studiën
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TSTS	Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies
TTSS	Text and Translation Society Series
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des altchristlichen Literatur
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
UPATS	University of Pennsylvania, Armenian Texts and Studies
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WC	Westminster Commentaries
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Abbreviations of Writings of Philo

Abr.	*De Abrahamo*
Agr.	*De agricultura*
Aet.	*De aeternitate mundi*
Cher.	*De cherubim*
Conf.	*De confusione linguarum*
Congr.	*De congressu erutionis gratia*
Decal.	*De decalogo*
Deus.	*Quod Deus sit immutabilis*
Deo.	*De Deo*
Det.	*Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*
Ebr.	*De ebrietate*
Fuga.	*De fuga et inventione*
Gig.	*De gigantibus*
Her.	*Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*
Ios.	*De Iosepho*
Leg.	*Legum allegoriae*
Legat.	*Legatio ad Gaium*
Migr.	*De migratione Abrahami*
Mos.	*De vita Mosis*
Mut.	*De mutatione nominum*
Opif.	*De opificio mundi*
Plant.	*De plantatione*
Post.	*De posteritate Caini*
Praem.	*De praemiis et poenis*
QE.	*Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum*
QG.	*Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim*
Sacr.	*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*
Somn.	*De somniis*
Spec.	*De specialibus legibus*
Virt.	*De virtutibus.*

Other Abbreviations and Notations Used in References

ad loc.	*ad locum,* at the place discussed
annot.	annotated
cf.	confer, compare (does not directly substantiate what is argued)
col(s).	colum(s)
cong.	concerns a publication resulting from a congress, conference or symposium

corr.	corrected
diss.	doctoral dissertation (whether of not called Ph.D.)
ed(s).	edited by / editor(s)
edn	edition
et al.	*et alii,* and others (esp. other, not-mentioned authors or editors)
fol.	folio
gen. ed.	general editor
Habil.	abbreviation of *Habililtation* (in Germany and some other countries the procedure in which one qualifies oneself for teaching at a university); when used in this book this abbreviation mostly relates to a writing (a *Habilitationsschrift*), sometimes to the written version of a presentation (a *Habilitationsvortrag*)
impr.	impression
LXX	the Septuagint
ms(s).	manuscript(s)
MT	the Masoretic text (the text of the Hebrew Bible as it has been standardized, among other things by adding vocal signs, by the so-called Masoretes during the first millennium)
n.d.	not dated
n.s.	new series
note	If this designation follows after the reference after the mention of a page, the reference relates specifically to the descriptive/commenting part of a note on the page mentioned.
(note)	This designation follows after the mention of a page and means that the reference concerned relates both to the main text of the page mentioned and to the descriptive/commenting part of a note on this page.
repr.	reprint
rev.	revised
s.l.	*sine loco,* without place: the place of publication is not described.
s.n.	*sine nomine,* without name, the name of the publisher is not described.
s.v.	*sub voce,* under the word of .. or under the word discussed
trans.	translated by / translator(s)
v./vv.	verse(s)
VL	Vetus Latina

1

The Sign of Sinai: Exodus 3.12b as Part of a Call Narrative and Beyond

The sign described in Exod. 3.12 usually causes surprise.[1] Moses has been sent by God to go to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (3.10). In response, he argues that he is not capable of fulfilling this task: 'Who [am] I . . . ?' God then promises his assistance: 'I will be with you.' At the same time he offers him the sign in question: 'this [is] the sign that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will [all] serve God on this mountain.'[2] The problem is how such a sign can encourage Moses, when it apparently takes place after the execution of the com-

1. This chapter is a revision of a contribution that appeared under the title 'Concerning the Sign of Sinai (Ex. 3:12)—Including a Survey of Prophetic and Call Signs', in J.W. Dyk *et al.* (eds.), *Unless Some One Guide Me . . . : Festschrift for Karel A. Deurloo* (ACEBT.Sup 2; Maastricht: Shaker, 2001), pp. 33-41. That contribution continued ch. 5 of my dissertation, *Het zonderlinge karakter van de godsnaam: Literaire, psychoanalytische en theologische aspecten van het roepingsverhaal van Moses (Exodus 2.23-4.17)* ['The Peculiar Nature of the Divine Name . . .'] (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1996): it resumed some aspects and complemented it in particular with a section about proof-saying. Besides a more or less thorough reworking of the original parts, the present chapter differs from the contribution to the Festschrift by the addition of the interpretation of two Isaianic signs and an investigation of the narrative framework. The dissertation was written under the guidance of K.A. Deurloo, then professor of Old Testament at the University of Amsterdam. My dedication of the contribution included the following words: '"There is life after a dissertation," he once said in view of my inclination to include too much in it.' I, and probably also he, could not have imagined then that post-doctoral life might last so long.

2. My biblical translations in this and other chapters attempt to render the distinctive features of the Hebrew text as much as possible. In this I have taken advantage of the translation of Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken, 1995); and that given in Aleida G. van Daalen, 'The Place Where YHWH Showed Himself to Moses: A Study of the Composition of Exodus 3'', in Martin Kessler (trans. and ed.), *Voices from Amsterdam: A Modern Tradition of Reading Biblical Narrative* (SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), pp. 133-44, esp. 136-38.

mission. To express it in a Dutch idiom, the sign comes as 'mustard after the meal'.

Because of the difficulty, something else is sometimes supposed to be the sign offered. 'This' (*ze*) in 'this is the sign', might be understood as pointing to the burning bush.[3] Then this (general) demonstrative pronoun would, however, refer to something that has been mentioned eight verses before (cf. the specific designation 'this mountain' at the end of the verse). 'This' is also thought to relate to the promise of support just made.[4] But in this case the sign would be connected with something as abstract as a statement. An objection against both alternatives is that they create a new problem. If it is not understood as a description of the sign, the asyndetic sentence 'when you . . . on this mountain' can fit into the story only with difficulty.[5] Time and again several biblical signs (esp. 1 Sam. 2.34; 2 Kgs 19.29; Isa. 7.14; Jer. 44.29) are adduced as similar, and thus the peculiarity of the sign in Exod. 3.12 is denied.[6] The sign is also often seen as connected with the biblical idea that the fulfilment of a prophecy proves the legitimacy of the prophet in question.[7] Similarly the interpretation of the sign is sometimes thought to indicate—and now we arrive at another culinary metaphor—that 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating!'[8] The last two suggestions do not, however, account for the shift within the sign from the exodus from Egypt to the serving of God on the mount. Some authors suppose that the text has been corrupted and, notably, that the original sign has been omitted.[9] Sometimes the text is explained from the perspective of the author and readers: they live after the event, and to them the sign can therefore be encouraging.[10] The last two explanations are obviously solutions of last resort.

All these exegeses depart from certain presuppositions about the nature and function of the sign of Exod. 3.12. They do not take into account another difficulty: the sign is given to Moses, but he himself will have an important

3. E.g. Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus* (OTL; London: SCM, 1974), pp. 59-60 (however, for him the sign also refers typologically to the event of Sinai).

4. E.g. Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*, I (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908), p. 269.

5. Childs, *Exodus*, p. 56.

6. E.g. J. Coert Rylaarsdam, 'The Book of Exodus', in G.A. Buttrick (ed.), *The Interpreter's Bible*, I (New York: Abingdon, 1952), esp. p. 874; F.J. Helfmeyer, s.v. *'ôth*, *TDOT,* I, pp. 167-88, esp. pp. 183-84.

7. E.g. Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW, 189; orig. Habil.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), p. 34 (he refers to Deut. 18.21-22).

8. R. Alan Cole, *Exodus* (TOTC; London: Tyndale Press, 1973), p. 68.

9. E.g. Martin Noth, *Das zweite Buch Mose* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), p. 29.

10. E.g. Kåre Berge, *Reading Sources in a Text: Coherence and Literary Criticism in the Call of Moses* (ATS, 54; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1997), esp. p. 125.

role in the execution of it (leading the people out of Egypt, serving God on the mount). To a certain extent, Moses and even more the people are therefore in control whether the sign occurs or not. Another peculiarity is that the sign is connected with the promise of support, but its function is formulated as '[it is] I [who] have sent you.' In this way the attention shifts from the promise to the confirmation of the identity of the sender. It is obvious that not only does the main difficulty of the sign need an explanation but also these minor difficulties.

In this chapter the sign of Exod. 3.12 and its issues will be approached from a variety of points of view: a comparison with other signs and similar phenomena; a study of the narrative patterns involved; and tracing the relationship of the sign to the rest of the call narrative and the book of Exodus.

1. *The Category of Prophetic and Call Signs*

The use of the word *'ôt*, 'sign', varies widely in Classical Hebrew.[11] 'Signs' may range from a smoke signal (on a potsherd from Lachish) to the Egyptian plagues as manifestation of Yhwh's power and will (e.g. Ps. 105.27). For the sake of orientation, the following are features of an *'ôt*: (1) (function) it conveys some information; (2) (accessibility of this information) it requires in principle an interpretation and is therefore often connected with an instruction; (3) (medium) it always has a concrete, if not visual, nature. In the present section not only signs will be discussed that are called *'ôt* but also some named *môpēt*. Generally speaking, the latter denomination concerns extraordinary events or peculiar behaviours that are considered to be meaningful.[12]

If we want to have a better understanding of the nature of the sign (*'ôt*) in Exod. 3.12, it seems most profitable to pay attention in particular to a rather restricted group of signs: those accompanying either a prophetic announcement or the call of a saviour. This group is not entirely homogeneous, for there are similarities as well as differences within the group. These signs are introduced for the most part by what might be called the 'formula of sign-giving' (*Zeichensetzungsformel*): 'this [is] a sign for you (that . . .).'[13] This formula provides a first indication of the nature of the signs concerned.

11. See the biblical dictionaries, e.g., Helfmeyer, *'ôth*, pp. 167-88.

12. For the overlap and difference in meaning of both terms, see David Stacey, *Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament* (London: Epworth, 1990), pp. 17-18.

13. 1 Sam. 2.34; 1 Kgs 13.3 (here called *môpēt*); 2 Kgs 19.29 = Isa. 37.30; 2 Kgs 20.9 = Isa. 38.7; Jer. 44.29. Cf. Hermann Drews, *Die Zeichenprobe: Ein literarisches Schema, seine Herkunft und Verwendung in erzählenden Texten des Alten Testaments* (diss.; Göttingen: s.n., 1977), pp. 63-67 ('Die Zeichenformel'). For 1 Sam. 14.10, which is not an announcement to others, see *Die Zeichenprobe*, pp. 64-65.

These signs are related to a word announcing a future event or—in the case of a 'call'—imposing a duty upon someone (with all its future implications). In the Hebrew Bible this formula is used exclusively by Yhwh or in his name. The aim of the sign is to lead the addressee to the conclusion that the words spoken are reliable; in such cases, a sign has therefore the function of evidence. This function is realized in the following ways.[14]

(A) A sign may function as a prefigurement of the event announced by the affinity of its nature. In that case the reasoning goes something like this: if the event of the sign takes place, it is probable that the greater event announced—to which the event of the sign is similar and of which it is sometimes actually a part—will also occur. Consistent with its character, this kind of sign is restricted to prophetic announcements.

The following instances exemplify this description. According to 1 Samuel 2, the death of the two sons of Eli on the same day (v. 34) anticipates the decline of his whole house (vv. 31-33). In 1 Kings 13 the tearing down of Jeroboam's altar at Bethel and the pouring out of its ashes (v. 3; in this respect also belonging to type B) are a sign (here called *môpēt*) of the future slaughter of the priesthood of Bethel on this altar (v. 2). In Jeremiah 44 the death of Pharaoh Hophra portends (vv. 29-30) the doom of the people of Judah who have escaped to Egypt (vv. 27-28). When the sign of Exod. 3.12 is considered to be similar to these signs, the difference in the latter between prefigurement and fulfilment is in fact ignored.

(B) A sign may also consist of an extraordinary, miraculous event. The idea is obvious: such an extraordinary event can only be of divine origin, and as such it confirms the divine provenance of the words spoken. This description is exemplified by the sign that Gideon receives: the meal prepared is burnt by the touch of his interlocutor (Judg. 6.17-22). Such a sign may be a natural part of a commissioning story, but it can also be detected in a prophetic context. According to 2 Kgs 20.9-11, the receding of the shadow ten degrees attests to the recovery of Hezekiah. A further resemblance between these signs is that they occur within the context of asking for a sign and responding by means of it (cf. Exod. 4.1-9 and Deut. 13.2-3).

(C) Relatively common events that are predicted may also function as a sign. A case in point is found in 1 Sam. 10.1-7. Until recently exegetes mostly

14. Childs distinguishes between only two kinds of signs (*Exodus*, pp. 57-58), the types A and B mentioned hereafter. He refers to but does not discuss the signs of 2 Kgs 19.29 and Isa. 7.14, nor even the sign of 2 Kgs 20.9. In any case, the last sign blurs his classification inasmuch as this is thought to coincide with the distinction between a prophetic announcement and the call of a saviour.

followed the more extensive reading of the Septuagint in v. 1. Among other things we find there the formula 'this [is] a sign for you.' However, this extensive reading seems to be compiled from the context (esp. 9.16, 17) by a later hand.[15] If we follow the Masoretic text, the only words of Samuel to Saul in v. 1 are: '[Is it] not [so] that (*kî*) Yhwh has anointed you as a ruler over his heritage?' This question is not purely rhetorical (like that in 9.20), because the events predicted in vv. 2-6 constitute the answer to this question. If these events are called 'signs' in vv. 7 and 9, it must be with a view to this issue.

The events predicted by Samuel consist of three encounters that Saul will have on his homeward journey. The first is with two men who report that the asses Saul went to seek have already been found. There is in principle nothing unusual in such an event.[16] In this case, the bare fact of Samuel's foreknowledge shows, however, his intimate relationship with Yhwh (cf. Amos 3.7), and thus confirms the divine origin of his anointing of Saul as leader of Israel (v. 1). But there is more. Thoughts and experiences of Saul preceding the meeting with Samuel will recur in the encounters. For example, the two men will report what he himself already suggested: his father is now only concerned about him and not about the lost asses (10.2; cf. 9.5). Such correspondences indicate that Yhwh is personally involved with him and even guides what happens to him.[17] In this way they present a more direct link with his anointing. This connection is even more evident in the third event foretold, which is less trivial than the first two. Saul will be seized by the spirit of God and then 'prophesy'. This transitory situation points to his change as a person and his elevation to leadership (cf. Num. 11.25-29).[18]

15. The Septuagint reads: 'Has not the Lord anointed you as a ruler over his people, over Israel? And you shall rule among the people of the Lord and you shall save it from the hand of its enemies round about. And this [is] the sign to you that [*hoti,* cf. *kî* in Hebrew] the Lord has anointed you over his heritage as prince.' For the suggestion of a compilation from other verses see the extensive discussion of Stephen Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel* (OBO 57; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), pp. 166-69; see also David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 281-82, who wonders why *kî* has not also been omitted when the shortening of the text would have been caused by haplography through *mšḥk yhwh,* 'Yhwh has anointed you', as is often thought.

16. Similarly Carl A. Keller, *Das Wort OTH als 'Offenbarungszeichen Gottes': Eine philologisch-theologische Begriffsuntersuchung zum Alten Testament* (diss.; Basle: Hoenen, 1946), p. 51, cf. 20-23). Differently, Childs, *Exodus*, 58: he speaks in relation to vv. 2-6 of 'a series of astonishing events'.

17. Cf. Martin Buber, 'Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl', *VT* 6 (1956), pp. 113-73, esp. 133-34; Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12* (BibLitS, 10; Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985), p. 321.

18. See Madalina Vartejanu-Joubert, 'Les "Anciens du people" et Saül. *Temps, espace* et *rite de passage* dans Nombres XI et 1 Samuel X', *VT* 55 (2005), pp. 542-63.

In these ways the exhortation to take action is prepared. The last verse of this narrative sequence, v. 7, runs as follows: 'when these signs come upon you, do what your hand will find, because God [will be] with you.' The underlying thought seems to be: when the signs have attested that God is responsible for the anointing of Saul and since they imply even his personal engagement with him, it is obvious that he will also assist him in his task (which is primarily to free the Israelites from the Philistines—cf. 9.16 and the allusion in 10.5).

In all the examples of the subtypes mentioned the sign occurs sooner or later after speaking the word in question, but precedes in every case the future that the word is speaking about. Such the sign functions as a guarantee, as evidence that this future will indeed occur.[19] The sign of Exod. 3.12 obviously does not fit this pattern because it does not precede the event in question.

2. *Two Particular Signs*

We have still, however, to discuss two Isaianic signs, those of Isa. 7.14 and of 2 Kgs 19.29 (= Isa. 37.30). They are sometimes considered similar to the sign of Exod. 3.12. These signs are heavily debated, in particular the first (esp. because the verse involved functions as a reference text for the virgin birth of Christ; see Matt. 1.18). They are complex in nature, but not without affinity to the signs mentioned in the previous section (esp. with type C). In the context of this chapter only brief attention can be paid to them, and this will focus on their general characteristics.

The Immanuel Sign of Isaiah 7.14. According to Isaiah 7, Syria and (northern) Israel go together to war against Judah and want to replace King Ahaz by a puppet. The prophet Isaiah announces to Ahaz that their plans will not succeed (v. 7). The terrified king is told to ask for a sign '[from] deep in the underworld or high above' (v. 11), obviously referring to a miraculous event (type B above). When Ahaz refuses, the prophet says that he will give him a sign. At least the immediately following statement describes the sign: 'Look, the young woman (*'almâ*) [is] pregnant (*hārâ*); she is about to bear [participle] a son and will [or: may] name him Immanu-El' (v. 14). As a verbless clause the sequence of *'almâ* and *hārâ*, an adjective in Hebrew, refers in principle to a present situation. This is confirmed by the subsequent

19. Cf. Childs, *Exodus*, 57: 'Ordinarily, a sign takes the form of a concrete guarantee which follows the *promise* and yet precedes the fulfilment' (italics mine). Since this definition occurs in relation to a discussion of the sign of Exod. 3.12, with this positive formulation Childs will have had in mind the promise of support of v. 12a.

use of an active participle referring to something imminent. The preceding deictic particle *hinnê*, 'look', indicates proximity in time (not in space: it is not very probable that the young woman is assisting in the preparation for a siege).[20] The exact meaning of the word *ʾalmâ* is the subject of a vigorous debate, but if we take all the data into account (including its related masculine and the abstract forms), it indicates most probably not a virgin as traditionally thought but a young woman inasmuch as she has procreative potential, which concerns the time until motherhood, the birth of the first child.[21] The use of the article suggests somebody known at least to Ahaz and Isaiah,[22] but in all probability also easy to identify by a native reader. This *ʾalmâ* may be Ahaz's latest catch, someone who may be expected in connection with an oriental king (cf. Cant. 1.3; 6.8—the latter text suggests that *ʿălāmôt* form a part of the royal harem), even a rather small one like Ahaz. Since she is not a chief wife, a 'queen' (Cant. 6.8), it is probably not unusual that she would give the name to the child. As a theophoric name, Immanu-El may express a confession ('God *is* with us'), confidence ('God *will be* with us'; cf. 8.10), gratitude ('God *has been* with us!') or a wish ('God *be* with us!'; cf. 8.8).[23] The name is not explained and its meaning has therefore to be inferred. The woman may simply be expressing her gratitude to God because of the birth of the child. However, the context of the chapter suggests that there are more reasons to be grateful. The birth contrasts with the intended replacement of the royal family, which, as an established dynasty,

20. C.H.J. van der Merwe, 'A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on *hinnê* in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth', *HS* 48 (2007), pp. 101-40, esp. 127-28 (note). See also Gen. 16.11 and Judg. 13.5, 7 (cf. v. 3) with a similar sequence of *hinnê*, a verbless clause with the adjective *hārâ* and the active participle of *yld*. See Andreas Kunz, 'Die Vorstellung von Zeugung und Schwangerschaft im antiken Israel', *ZAW* 111 (1999), pp. 561-82, esp. 574-75. As for Judg. 13.5, see also Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1975), p. 220. In relation to these texts it should be realized that in the past the assessment of pregnancy in the early stages was not a simple matter.

21. 'To say this another way, a woman ceases to be an *ʾalmâ* when she becomes a mother—not when she becomes a wife or a sexual partner.' For these conclusions see the sound lexical analysis of John Walton, s.v. *ʿălûmîm*, in *NIDOTTE*, III, pp. 415-19. His analysis is notably based on Isa. 7.14 and 54.4 ('shame of *ʿălûmîm*', within a context in which a woman occurs which is 'barren' in v. 1 and someone 'becoming a husband' in v. 5), both texts having childbearing as a pivotal issue.

22. Cf. Christo H.J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), sec. 24.4.4.ii. b+c: the article indicates a specific referent, something that has been mentioned before or implied by the context. Its discourse use may suggest, however, familiarity.

23. Martin Noth classifies theophoric names according to these categories; see Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BZAW, 3,10/46; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1928), p. 133. It should, however, be noted that Noth himself treats the Immanuel name only as a confidence name (see p. 160).

would in all probability be massacred in that case.[24] In this connection, it is noteworthy that 2 Chron. 28.6-7 reports that, among others, Ahaz's son Maaseiah was killed during that time. The name may also reflect confidence since the crisis will not be over at the time of the birth. This is obvious from the next verses. Verse 15 reads, '[It is] butter and honey [that] he will eat, so that he learns to reject the bad and choose the good.'[25] Presumably this sentence refers to the period that a child learns to eat solid food (instead of putting everything in its mouth). Butter or honey is then added to make the food more palatable (to eat butter or honey alone is at least for butter difficult to imagine because it would be too heavy).[26] This verse is probably an explanatory note to the next verse, restricting the discernment mentioned there to a question of food. The introductory word *kî* signals that an elucidation is following in v. 16: 'For (*kî*) before the youth learns to reject the bad and choose the good, the land whose two kings you are afraid of will be abandoned.' Immediately after it (without any conjunction), the announcement follows that days will come as have never been since the separation of northern Israel from Judah (v. 17). It should be noted that like the previous statements this announcement may have a positive sense and point to the abolition of the partition of the country.[27] Such an interpretation may include even the last words tacked on it, 'with [*'ēt*] the king of Assyria'. They may simply be an interpretive gloss to the last two verses telling that the king of Assyria will function as instrument of this change (cf. *'ēt* in Gen. 4.1; Judg. 8.7; 1 Kgs 9.25).[28] However, the added words may simultaneously signal danger looming on the horizon. Indeed, the next verses (vv. 18-25) announce a disastrous situation in the land. Seen in this way,

24. Similarly Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis* (SBLDiss, 123; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 169-70. For the elimination of a more or less established dynasty, see Judg. 9.1-6; 1 Kgs 14.10; 15.29; 16.3-4, 11; 2 Kgs 10.1-17; 11.1.

25. Note that the word *da'at* following lamed is considered here to be an infinitive, and to have a consecutive function in this context. Cf. Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräische Präpositionen,* III. *Die Präposition Lamed* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), sec. 75. Jenni himself subsumes this case under *lamed adverbiale*, more specifically under 'Zeitbestimmungen nach Ereignissen' (sec. 889). Presumably he considers the word *da'at* a noun, like the other instances he treats there.

26. According to Stacey, the diet does not reflect abundance or lack, as usually thought, but simply points to the intermediate phase between breast feeding and solid food, in which honey serves to sweeten the (soured thick) milk. See Stacey, *Prophetic Drama*, 116-20, esp. 116-17. However, the word in question seems to refer not to milk but to butter. See A. Caquot, s.v. *chālābh*, *TDOT,* IV, pp. 386-91, esp. 390-91 (*chem'āh*).

27. E. Hammershaimb, 'The Immanuel Sign', *Studia Theologica* 3 (1950), pp. 124-42, esp. 137-38.

28. For these instances, see *DCH,* I, s.v. *'ēt*, sec. 6a, p. 452.

the sense of the sign shifts; it appears to refer only to a fortunate but limited period. Without doubt this shift has to do with the reluctant attitude of King Ahaz and his politics. For the discussion of the nature of the sign, this shift in sense is, however, less important.

The triviality (family life), if not vulgarity, of the sign (allusion to the talk of the town by the familiar sounding '*the* young woman') contrasts with the sublime nature of the sign that Ahaz was allowed to seek. In that respect it meets, ironically, the objection of the king that he does not want to put God to test. The confidence of the woman is also obviously unlike the fear of Ahaz. Possibly she sympathizes with the prophet, which would explain why she would be willing to give her child the name Immanuel. As the *kî*-sentence clearly indicates, time is a crucial link in the relationship between the events of the sign and the political events. The events connected with the child constitute a kind of timetable: (1) the present pregnancy (which will soon finish, as the use of the participle of 'bearing' indicates); (2) the giving of the name after the childbirth; (3) the time when butter and honey are added to the food (presupposed is the suckling age, which may last a few years); (4) the first discernment of the child shown by what it likes to eat. It is stated that before the last stage Syria and Israel will already be in desolation.

It is rather striking that the words of Isaiah from v. 14 onward do not pay attention to the acute problems in Judah, the presence of the armies of Israel and Syria, but look beyond, namely, at the removal of all danger from these countries. Also in this respect the sign is different from the sign that Ahaz might ask for. What is important to us is that the sign and the first relief that it embodies precede the complete elimination of danger.

The Sign of 2 Kings 19.29. According to 2 Kings 18–19 (parallel: Isaiah 36–37), the Assyrian king Sennacherib has invaded Judah with his army and now threatens Jerusalem. To King Hezekiah, Isaiah predicts Sennacherib's retreat from the country and gives subsequently a sign, introduced by the formula 'this [is] the sign to you' (second-person singular, as usual; 19.29). What follows is the instruction to eat from the 'aftergrowth' and the 'wild growth' in the first and the second year. Only in the third year will sowing, planting and harvesting become possible again. According to v. 30, the remnant of Judah will again take root and bear fruit. Presumably this image prepares the following elucidation by a *kî*-sentence (v. 31): 'For [it is] from Jerusalem [that] a remnant will go out and the escaped ones [will do so] from Mount Zion.' The thought is apparently that the Judean people who escaped from the Assyrian hostilities into the city will spread again over the country. It is obvious that the *kî*-sentence carries great weight by its parallelism with the note that 'the zeal of Yhwh of the hosts will do this'.

The exact nature and function of the sign are not immediately evident because its objective and addressee are not described. The sign follows

immediately after a prophesy spoken by Isaiah; its main part consists of a direct discourse to Sennacherib according to which the latter, because of his blasphemous talk, will return ignominiously to his country. At first sight the sign may seem to be addressed to Sennacherib. What is more, the natural events of the sign seem to follow the retreat of the Assyrians. In that case the sign would be a proof of the truth of the prophetic words after the event.[29] This reading may find some confirmation in the fact that according to the vv. 35-37, this retreat will happen within a short time after a crisis in their army. However, when talking about the food production by the land, the words of the sign are obviously addressed to the inhabitants of Judah (with second-person plural verb forms in v. 29b). It is therefore better to conceive these words as returning to the original addressee of the prophecy, King Hezekiah, but now also including the other Judeans. From Hezekiah's point of view another understanding of the sign is possible. The different natural occurrences of the sign constitute a kind of timetable of a gradual recovery of the land. What is important is that the first stage will already start with the end of the siege of Jerusalem, but that this does not automatically imply the immediate departure of all the Assyrians from Judah. Therefore, because of its nature the sign does apparently presuppose not only an extensive devastation of the land, something the Assyrians are reputed for, but also their continued (but probably weakened) presence in the country for some time.[30] If this is taken into account, the sign may be seen in conformity with the other prophetic signs and function as a portent concerning the departure of the Assyrians.[31] The sign finally points to the complete fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy—which implies not only the retreat of Sennacherib himself to Assyria but also of all his men—and against the latter background, the resurrection of Judah as a nation. This reading finds a confirmation in the clarifying *kî*-sentence of verse 31 that explicitly refers to Judah's recovery.

29. Thus, e.g., J. Ridderbos, *De profeet Jesaja* (KVHS, 1; Kampen: Kok, 1922), p. 251 (the sign consists of 'a particularity connected with the fulfilment'); John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 664 ('rather after the fact'); Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39* (FOTL, 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 475 ('a means to verify').

30. For the former aspect, see Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 238; for the latter, Paul Auvray, *Isaïe 1-39* (SBi; Paris: Gabalda, 1972), p. 312.

31. The conception of the sign as a portent is found among many authors, often in connection with a speculation about the historical or eschatological sense. See, e.g., Karl Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja* (KHC; Tübingen: Mohr, 1900), p. 257; R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1980), p. 286; Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings* (NCBC, II; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984), p. 580; cf. Eduard König, *Das Buch Jesaja* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1926), p. 311 (combining the two views).

Some features of the text corroborate this second interpretation of the sign. First, the text does not report everything in detail; for instance, it may be inferred from it—although it is not explicitly stated—that there was more than one Assyrian army in the country (see 19.8; cf. 18.17). Further, the way the story is told seems to follow a pattern known from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible: the account of 18.13-16 functions as a summary, whereas the account of 18.17–19.37 consists of a resumption and expansion of it. According to the summary, the Assyrian king was paid off with tribute by Hezekiah, which implies that the threat had not disappeared immediately after the crisis in the Assyrian army (19.35).[32] But what most favours the second interpretation is that after the description of the sign (19:29-31) the retreat of the Assyrian king is directly connected with the protection of Jerusalem by Yhwh (19.32-34).

The similarities and the differences of the sign of Exod. 3.12 with the two Isaianic signs are noteworthy. All these three signs consist of a particular detail in the way in which the existing situation of distress is overcome. The three signs are also similar in having a moral implication (in contrast with the rather objective aspect of prefigurative and miraculous signs): the serving of God on the mountain, the giving of a name, and the eating of what is available, respectively. On top of these common features they also present an encouraging powerful image in a time of great distress: Isa. 7.14, the birth of a royal son; 2 Kgs 19.29, the gradual recovery of agriculture; Exod. 3.12, the serving of God by all the people on the mount. However, whereas the Isaianic signs point to circumstances clearly beyond that distress, the sign of Exod. 3.12 itself takes place after it. In other words, the Isaianic signs have the nature of a portent, whereas the sign of Exod. 3.12 is a proof after the event.

3. *Recognition Sayings and the Sign of Exodus 3.12*

According to the investigation up to now, the sign of Exod. 3.12 seems to be unique among the biblical signs. However, one may look whether there are comparable phenomena in another area. Indeed, a similar phenomenon exists in the form of 'recognition sayings' (*Erkenntnisaussagen*).[33] Exam-

32. See the excellent review of Richard S. Hess, 'Hezekiah and Sennacherib in 2 Kings 18-20', in Hess and G.J. Wenham (eds.), *Zion, City of our God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 23-41, esp. 38. Also Sennacherib's own report speaks of a heavy tribute besides a reduction of the country (Hess, 'Hezekiah and Sennacherib', p. 39).

33. Resemblance with these 'proof sayings' (about this designation, see below in the main text) was suggested to me during the defence of the thesis mentioned in n. 1 by Prof. Dr H. Leene, a specialist on the Major Prophets, at that time attached to the

ples of them are in found particularly in Ezekiel (76 times) and Exodus (16 times),[34] but also elsewhere (in total about 150 times). In its most typical form a recognition saying refers to a future intervention of Yhwh, followed by 'and (then) you shall/they will know that I [am] Yhwh' (e.g. Ezek. 6.7; 25.11). Such a saying connects the announcement of some action of Yhwh to a statement about his public recognition as a consequence. Therefore, also here the recognition arises only after the event! Examples in Exodus that most approach this form are: 'I will make Pharaoh's heart strong-willed, and /so that he will pursue them, and I will be glorified through Pharaoh and all his army, and /so that the Egyptians will know that I [am] Yhwh' (14.4); and 'at twilight you shall eat flesh and at daybreak you shall be satisfied with bread, and (then) you shall know that I [am] Yhwh your god' (16.12). In both cases a specific intervention of Yhwh is supposed and described more closely in the context.

According to a certain view on recognition sayings, the resemblance of the sign of Exod. 3.12 with them would even go further. Characteristic for this view is that recognition sayings are alternatively called 'proof sayings' (*Erweisworte*).[35] According to this view the fulfilment of the announcement serves as evidence that the interpretation of this event as an act of Yhwh was correct. In its purposiveness, there would be a further resemblance with the sign of Exod. 3.12. However, an accurate syntactical investigation shows that the 'phraseology of knowing Yhwh' is mostly not purposive and therefore such a conception is in general not justified.[36]

VU University in Amsterdam. I am very grateful to him for calling my attention to this phraseology.

34. These numbers are borrowed, apart from the one concerning Exodus, from Marc Vervenne, 'The Phraseology of "Knowing YHWH" in the Hebrew Bible: A Preliminary Study of its Syntax and Function', in Vervenne and J. van Ruiten (eds.), *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (Festschrift W.A.M. Beuken; BETL, 132; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1997), pp. 467-92, esp. 469-70.

35. It was in particular the investigations of Walther Zimmerli that put the spotlight on the formulaic nature of the utterances in question. See 'Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises (Erweiswort), eine prophetische Gattung' (orig. 1957), in Zimmerli, *Gottes Offenbarung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament* [I] (ThB, 19; Munich: Kaiser, 1963), pp. 120-32. See also Zimmerli, 'Erkenntnis Gottes nach dem Buche Ezechiel' (1954), in *Gottes Offenbarung*, pp. 41-119; and 'Die Wahrheitserweis Jahwes nach der Botschaft der beiden Exilpropheten' (1963), in *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Prophetie: Gesammelte Aufsätze,* II (ThB 51; Munich: Kaiser, 1974), pp. 192-212, esp. 197-204. The first two essays have been translated in Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* (trans. D.W. Stott; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), pp. 99-110 and 29-98, respectively.

36. After Vervenne, 'The Phraseology of "Knowing YHWH"', pp. 467-92. The reading of this article forced me to modify my view on the matter such as expressed in the corresponding section (titled 'Prophetic Proof Sayings') of the article mentioned in n. 1.

There are, nevertheless, also *purposive sayings,* and let us pay attention to them. After the plague of the frogs has taken place, Pharaoh ask Moses to pray for their removal. Moses asks him when this should happen (cf. for such an option 2 Kgs 20.9-10; Isa. 7.11). Pharaoh answers in 8.6/10[37]: 'Tomorrow.' Moses then says, 'According to your words (then). In order (*l^{e}ma'an*) that you may know there is none like Yhwh our god.' In this case the timing of the termination of the plague apparently serves as proof of the involvement of Yhwh (similarly 9.29). In this respect the announcement of a plague in which a distinction is made among whom it will hit is even more clear (8.18-19/22-23): 'I will make distinct, on that day, the land of Goshen, where my people is situated, so that there will be no vermin there, in order that you may know that I [am] Yhwh in the land / that I, Yhwh, [am] in the land. I will put a redemption between my people and your people—tomorrow this sign will occur' (likewise 11.7). In all these cases a particularity (timing or distinction in application) of the fulfilment of the announcement apparently serves as proof that the event in question was really caused by Yhwh. In these cases this particularity of the event functions therefore as evidence after the event of the rightness of the interpretation given previously.

What is interesting is that in Exod. 8.18-19/22-23 this particular detail is called a sign.[38] It may now be hypothesized that the particular form of the sign of Exod. 3.12 originated from an interference with such recognition signs.

Also non-purposive recognition sayings, however, may have contributed to the particular nature of this sign. In this respect it is interesting that the sign of Exod. 3.12 corresponds to *a recognition saying in ch. 6*. Such a comparison is a matter of course because, as is well known, there exist several similarities between ch. 3 and ch. 6. The text in 6.6-7 reads as follows:

> I [am] Yhwh, I will bring you out from beneath the burdens of Egypt; I will rescue you from servitude to them; I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, with great [acts of] judgment; I will take you for me as people, and I will be for you as god; and you shall know that I [am] Yhwh your god, who brings you out from beneath the burdens of Egypt.

In both the sign of Exod. 3.12 and the recognition saying the relationship between Yhwh and Israel as being one between a god and his people is obviously at stake (for Exod. 3.12 itself, see also sec. 5, first part). There

37. In the case that a biblical verse is numbered twice, the first number indicates the number found in editions of the Hebrew, Masoretic biblical text, the second that is usually found in translations. Differences of only one verse are not indicated.

38. Cf. Jer. 44.29, where the sign-giving formula is paralleled by a recognition saying. Cf. also other cases where a sign and such a saying are related to each other: Exod. 10.2; Ezek. 24.24, 27 (both verses with symbolic acts called *môpēt*). Note that the event foretold by the recognition saying of Exod. 7.17 is elsewhere called a sign (cf. 4.9; 7.3).

is, however, a difference between the two narratives. The hyperbole in 3.12 that 'you (plural) shall serve God on this mountain' puts the activity of all the people at the forefront.[39] By contrast, the particular variant of the covenantal formula in 6.7, 'I will take you for me as a people' instead of 'you will be for me as a people' (e.g. Lev. 26.12), clearly indicates that the initiative is taken by Yhwh. The difference between the two chapters has to do with a development in the story, notably with the counter-productive visit of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and the resulting crisis in ch. 5.

It is also interesting that certain variants of the recognition saying show *further similarities* with the sign of Exod. 3.12. The action of the persons concerned sometimes holds a prominent place. This was, for instance, the case with the saying quoted above in 16.12.[40] As pointed out there, in such cases the action of Yhwh is always implied (cf. v. 12 with vv. 4, 7). The sign of 2 Kgs 19.29, treated in the previous section, also points in that direction by the explicit emphasis on Yhwh's action afterwards in v. 31. All these cases argue in favour of the view that the serving on the mount in Exod. 3.12 presupposes the guidance of Yhwh to this place. This is indeed indicated in the subsequent text (see 19.4; cf. 13.17-18).

From the fact that Yhwh's word is mediated, it is understandable that the recognition of his envoy is sometimes also at stake.[41] His being-sent may even be the central issue. For example, when Moses is confronted much later with a rebellion, he introduces the announcement that the men conspiring against him will be swallowed by earth as follows: 'By this you shall know that Yhwh has sent me to do all these deeds, that it is not from my heart . . .' (Num. 16.28).[42] The only difference with Exod. 3.12 is that in these cases being sent is at stake for others, not for the person sent.

For now, we can conclude that the sign of Exod. 3.12 and the recognition saying have as common features the announcement of an event and a specific knowing after the event, as a consequence of it. Moreover, in particular cases of the saying there are further similarities.

39. The plural verb form refers to Moses (addressee) and the (absent) people. This is not an unusual way of speaking (contra, e.g., Noth, *2. Mose*, p. 29). Cf. the examples mentioned by E.J. Revell, *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative* (CBET 14; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), sec. 19.2.3, pp. 253-54; 1 Sam. 29.10; 2 Sam. 15.34-36; 24.2; and 1 Kgs 9.4-6 are most comparable. See also 2 Kgs 19.29 (dealt with in sec. 2). Revell himself does not differentiate between the presence and absence of the co-addressees; in wording it makes no difference.

40. See also Ezek. 24.27 (with *môpēt* as the word for sign); cf. Exod. 31.13; Lev. 23.42-43.

41. 1 Kgs 18.36-37; cf. 2 Kgs 5.8, 15; 1 Kgs 17.24.

42. Also Zech. 2.13/9, 15/11; 4.9; 6.15.

4. *The Function of Call Signs, in Particular That of Exodus 3.12*

After this comparison of the sign of Exod. 3.12 to other signs and to recognition sayings, we can now pay attention to its embedding in the narrative. This narrative is usually characterized as a call narrative, and the function of the sign is partially determined by this context.

Let me first make some general remarks about the call narratives in question. They are characterized by the so-called *call pattern* (*Berufungsschema*). This pattern is a category developed by the school of form criticism (*Formgeschichte*) on the basis of, in particular, Exod. 3.9-12; Judg. 6.11-24; 1 Samuel 9-10; and Jeremiah 1. The elements may vary but include the indication of a need, the commission, an expression of reserve (usually but less precisely called 'objection'), an assurance of support, and a sign; in principle, the elements follow one another in this order.[43] In agreement with the form-critical viewpoint, the background of the pattern is found in a certain social setting (*Sitz im Leben*), for instance, the practice of sending an envoy.[44] The discernment of the call pattern was a milestone in exegesis, but in my view the form-critical approach does not really do justice to the variation among the narratives in question. In this respect a case in point is 1 Sam. 9.1–10.16, in which the commission is disclosed only little by little (9.20; 10.1, 7); the indication of a need (9.16) does not take place in the presence of the person commissioned; the expression of reserve (9.21), the signs and the assurance of support (10.2-7; see sec. 2 above) are out of order; and, moreover, an interruption of several verses occurs between elements of the call pattern (9.22-27). In Jeremiah 1, the indication of a need is missing (but it could be said to be presupposed; see 1.3-4, 14-19), and there is no explicit mention of a sign (although a symbolic act takes place in 1.9). In the next section we will see that the narrative of Exodus 3-4 is also not a simple version of the call pattern.

43. See, e.g., Wolfgang Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Studie zu 1 Sam. 9,1–10,16, Ex 3 f. und Ri 6,11b-17* (FRLANT 101; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 97-98, 137-42 (he builds on E. Kutsch, 1956); cf. N. Habel, 'The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives', *ZAW* 77 (1965), pp. 297-323 (Habel does not mention 1 Samuel 9-10, but he wishes to see the call pattern also in the call narratives of Isa. 6; 40.1-11; Ezekiel 1-3).

44. Thus Habel, 'Call Narratives', pp. 320-23 (Gen. 24.34-48 as illustrating the 'Sitz im Leben' of the 'Gattung' of the call narratives); differently, Richter, *Berufungsberichte*, pp. 169-76 (the background is formed by prophetic initiations of saviours in the pre-monarchical period).

In my view, it would be more suitable to speak about the call pattern as a matter of 'literary convention':[45] this term emphasizes the primarily literary nature of the correspondences between the narratives in question and is devoid of claims about a certain social-historical background.[46] The call pattern can be more specifically characterized as a 'type-scene', which describes the typical elements and their usual order.[47] To authors, such a convention is only a starting-point, since they can apply it in their own way.[48] This approach can therefore do more justice to the variation found in the call narratives.

We can now consider more closely the description of *the function of the signs* and their place in the different narratives about the call of a saviour (a subtype of the call narratives). It is remarkable that the function attributed to the sign in Exod. 3.12 is related to the 'I' of the commissioner: 'that [it is] I (*'ānōkî*) [who] have sent you'. The sign, therefore, does not serve primarily, as might be expected, to guarantee the success of the undertaking. In the other narratives of the call of a saviour, the signs given there function in the same way.

The sign-events in 1 Samuel 10 have already been discussed above at some length (see sec. 1). They are, in the first place, answers to the question whether the anointing of Saul has a divine origin (v. 1). It may be added that in this case the most obvious alternative is that it would only be the initiative of a human agent, Samuel.

According to Judg. 6.17, Gideon asks his unknown visitor for a sign 'that [it is] you [who] is speaking with me'. To the reader, this visitor has already been identified as 'Yhwh's messenger' from the very start of the narrative (6.11). Gideon himself obviously thought at first that he was dealing with a

45. This view has been inspired by a first exploration of this concept by Jilles de Klerk in relation to call narratives: see de Klerk, *'Ach Heer, zend toch een ander . . .': Een literaire analyse van de tegenwerpingen binnen de roepingsverhalen van Mozes, Gideon en Jeremia* (an undergraduate thesis under the guidance of K.A.D. Smelik) (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1988), pp. 105-8. The concept of literary convention was introduced in Old Testament studies by Robert Alter. See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 47-62.

46. Judged by the criterion of increasing complexity, the development of the call pattern would be most natural if it followed the order of (1) classical prophets (not a fixed scheme), (2) Judges 6 + 1 Samuel 10, and (3) Exodus 3-4. Cf. John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–Numbers* (CBET 10; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994), pp. 42-46, 58-61 (Van Seters considers Judg. 6 and 1 Sam. 9-10 on the one hand and Jer. 1 on the other to be unrelated sources of Exod. 3.9-10 and 4.10-17, respectively).

47. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, esp. pp. 50-51.

48. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 52: 'what is really interesting is not the schema of convention but what is done in each individual application of the schema.'

human being (see 6.13) but presumably he begins now to suspect the heavenly background of his interlocutor: this person has put himself in an authoritative position by sending him (6.14), and after Gideon's expression of reserve he promised his support to him ('I will be with you'), and even announced to him that he, Gideon, will defeat the Midianites 'as [if they were only] one man' (6.16). After this, Gideon offers a meal, perhaps thinking that a human being will eat it but a heavenly being will not do so.[49] Another possibility is that Gideon is afraid to be the victim of illusions (cf. his urging to remain at the place of the meeting, 6.18) and then prepares hastily a copious meal (6.19), knowing that illusions cannot eat. As in the commissioning of Saul (see above, sec. 1), the underlying thought is in all probability that if the identity of the speaker has been proven, Gideon may be sure of the promises, that is, of the divine assistance and the victory over the enemy.

Should the reference to the identity of the commissioner be seen as a fixed (or possibly later added) element of the call pattern? This is not certain. The uncertainty about the identity of the one who appears is more or less typical of a theophany (see, e.g., Genesis 22; 32; Judges 13; 1 Samuel 3),[50] and gets a specific form in the struggle about true and false prophecy, as is found in several biblical texts (e.g. Deuteronomy 18; Jeremiah 28). These texts suggest that the source of a vision may also be (a) one's own heart or (b) some spiritual power.[51] This background is most obvious in the case of the call of Gideon, and least evident in the call of Moses because in the latter case the focus is not on what is perceived but on the commissioning.

How does the function of the sign of Exod. 3.12 as described exactly *fit into the line of the narrative*? In the preceding verses Yhwh said to Moses 'I send you to Pharaoh: bring my people, the Children of Israel out of Egypt' (3.10). This is the counterpart of 'I have come down to rescue it [my people] out of Egypt' (3.7) in a doublet of verses. The first constituent of this doublet (3.7-8) focuses on Yhwh's observations and involvement on the one hand and his resoluteness to intervene and the aims of that on the other; the second (3.9-10) calls on Moses to take notice of what has come to Yhwh's attention and then exhorts him to take action. There are therefore two narrative lines: one focuses on Yhwh as acting person; the other puts the empha-

49. Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (BibIntS 38; trans. J. Chipman; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), p. 255. Cf. Judg. 13.15-16.

50. Cf. George W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* (JSOTSup, 420; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), esp. pp. 78-80 ('Sudden Revelation Followed by Gradual Recognition'), but also elsewhere, e.g., pp. 127-31, 135-37. Savran, who sees call narratives as a subset of theophany (p. 13), does not deal with the feature in question.

51. (a) See Jer. 14.14; 23.16-32; Ezek. 13.2-3,17; cf. Num. 16.28, in relation to Moses; (b) cf. 1 Kgs 22.23; Zech. 13.2; Jer. 2.8; 23.13.

sis on Moses' engagement. In the latter case, the role of Yhwh is reduced to mediating between the complaint of the Israelites and Moses' moving to action. These lines remain in fact apart from each other in this first discourse of Yhwh. The doublet is often explained by attributing the two parts to different sources. However, as the text stands, there is no need for that;[52] their presence can also be understood well on the narrative level.

The use of the conjunction *wᵉ'attâ* at the beginning of the second part already suggests a firm connection between the two lines. According to its basic deictic function, the composite particle *wᵉ'attâ* (literally 'and now') points to the time of enunciation.[53] As such, it contrasts with what precedes as referring to the past or the future. Its discourse function builds on that: it presents the following information as immediately relevant in the current situation. Like in some other instances, *wᵉ'attâ* introduces a resumption of a statement in v. 9.[54] It is further noteworthy that the particle is repeated in vv. 9-10. As such, it separates different stages of the discussion of a single topic. The second *wᵉ'attâ* does not mark a new (discourse) point in time in relationship to the first but only a continuation and confirmation of it.[55] The function of each *wᵉ'attâ* is defined more closely by the particle immediately following it. The particle *hinnê*, traditionally translated as 'behold' or 'look', basically points to something proximate in space.[56] As a discourse particle it often introduces the grounds for a speech act, indicating mental

52. Cf. Van Seters, *Life of Moses*, pp. 41-42: the complete overlap of the terminology of both parts with that in the Deuteronomistic History, esp. Judges and 1 Samuel, argues against this division.

53. Ernst Jenni, 'Zur Verwendung von *'attā* "jetzt" im Alten Testament', *TZ* 28.1 (1972) (FS O. Cullmann), pp. 5-12.

54. Gen. 44.30-31(33), cf. v. 29; Judg. 11.23(25), cf. v. 21.

55. For the multiple particle *we'attâ* as distinguishing different stages see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), sec. 39.3.4f. See further, as more specific about the subject, Frank Polak, 'Theophany and Mediator', in Marc Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction –Reception – Interpretation* (BETL 126; cong.; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), pp. 113-47, esp. 121 note: if *we'attah* doubles, 'one instance serves as the introduction to a concluding paragraph (macro-text, e.g., Ezra 10,3 [10.2-3 is meant?]), whereas the other serves to conclude a paragraph (micro-text, e.g., Ezra 10,2 [i.e. 10.3?]).' Polak seems to try to explain why *we'attâ* is already used before the actual conclusion. Perhaps one could better say that the last instance of *we'attâ* marks the actual conclusion, the other the prelude, the background to this conclusion.

For other instances, see Gen. 44.30, 33; 45.5, 8; Josh. 14.10 [2x], 12; 22.4 [2x]; Judg. 11.23, 25; 1 Sam. 24.21, 22; 25.26 [2x], 27; 26.19, 20; 2 Sam. 2.6, 7; 7.25, 28, 29 [≈ 1 Chron. 17.23, 26, 27]; 19.10, 11; 1 Kgs 1.18 [2x; MT]; 5.18/4, 20/6; 8.25, 26 [≈ 2 Chron. 6.16, 17]; 18.11, 14; Isa. 5.3, 5; 36.8, 10 [≈ 2 Kgs 18.23, 25—in v. 25 only *'attâ*]; Ruth 3.11, 12; Dan. 9.15, 17; Ezra 9.8, 10, 12; 10.2, 3; 2 Chron. 2.12, 14; 28.10, 11.

56. See van der Merwe, 'Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on *hinnê*', p. 138.

proximity in this case.[57] The speech act, a directive, is indicated here by the other particle in question, *lᵉkâ* ('Go' / 'Come on!').

Although *wᵉ'attâ* suggests a firm connection, the rest of the sentence does not fill this in; the existence of the two narrative lines relatively apart from each other is therefore not really neutralized. Their existence has in fact an important function within the story: it prepares the subsequent discussion between Moses and Yhwh in vv. 11-12 in a perfect way.

In v. 11 Moses responds to his commissioning with the question 'Who [am] I, that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt?' This is not a request for information but a so-called rhetorical question. On the basis of other instances of 'Who [am] I . . .?' and similar phrases it is usually understood as an expression of unworthiness.[58] This may be correct, but the question can be raised how exactly this meaning can be derived from the wording of the utterance.[59] By asking 'Who [am] I . . . ?' speakers present themselves as no longer knowing who they are. It suggests a discrepancy between how they know themselves and how they are supposed to be according to the task they face (Exod. 3.11; 1 Chron. 29.14; 2 Chron. 2.5) or the position acquired by them (1 Sam. 18.18; 2 Sam. 7.18 = 1 Chron. 17.16).[60] Some authors go a step further and see the response of Moses as an implicit refusal.[61] This position would agree with the prevailing view that a positive formulation of a rhetorical question (e.g. '[Am] I the watcher of my brother?', Gen. 4.9) implies a negative assertion (that is, 'I am *not* the watcher of my brother').[62] In the case of Exod. 3.11 this model can be applied only with some modification: 'I am not *such a person* that I should. . . .' What is more, not every type of rhetorical ques-

57. Van der Merwe, 'Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on *hinnê*', p. 130 (note).

58. For these formulaic words, see also Irene Lande, *Formelhafte Wendungen der Umgangssprache im Alten Testament* (diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1949), pp. 101-102 ('Die Formel der Herabsetzung'); George W. Coats, 'Self-Abasement and Insult Formulas', *JBL* 89 (1970), pp. 14-26, esp. 17-18.

59. Cf. Adina Moshavi, 'Two Types of Argumentation Involving Rhetorical Questions in Biblical Hebrew Dialogue', *Bib* 90 (2009), pp. 32-46, esp. 34, 39 and 45-46. She reconstructs a *modus tollens* argumentation that can be rendered as follows: premise 1: 'If I am worthy of it I should go to Pharaoh and take the Israelites out of Egypt'; premise 2: 'I am not'; conclusion: 'I should not go.'

60. Childs notes that Moses' objection reflects the feeling of 'a gaping discrepancy between his own ability and the enormity of the task'. See Childs, *Exodus*, pp. 73-74.

61. Besides Moshavi, 'Two Types of Argumentation', pp. 45-46, see also, e.g., Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, I (trans. J. Rebel and S. Woudstra; HCOT; Kampen: Kok, 1993), p. 361. Houtman says that 'Moses would rather not' go, pointing to the course of the dialogue, in particular to v. 4.13.

62. See, e.g., Moshavi, 'Two Types of Argumentation', p. 33 (with references); cf., however, p. 38 (note).

tion can be understood as a matter of a polarity reversal.[63] This is relevant in the case of the question 'Who [am] I . . . ?'; it is, for instance, improbable that in 2 Chron. 2.5 King Solomon would be unwilling to build a temple for Yhwh. What such a question actually articulates is closely connected with the discrepancy mentioned and concerns wonder (2 Sam. 7.18 = 1 Chron. 17.16) and humility (1 Sam. 18.18; 1 Chron. 29.14; 2 Chron. 2.5).[64] Since the preformative verb forms in the subordinate clauses can be understood in a modal sense ('that I *should* go / bring'), in the case of Moses, the question presumably expresses his hesitation about the big task ahead of him.

A rhetorical question often provokes as response a comment on what is implicitly suggested.[65] That is indeed the case here. Yhwh says in his turn: '[The point is] that (*kî*) I will be with you.' By means of the particle *kî* the speaker marks the following proposition as a correction of the proposition thought to be held by the hearer:[66] against Moses' idea that he has to do it alone, Yhwh expresses his involvement with Moses' mission.[67] It is this promise that finally brings about the connection between the two lines of the doublet.

In this context the description of the aim of the sign as showing that '[it is] I (*'ānōkî*) [who] have sent you' has a complex function. It is obvious

63. See Russell Lee-Goldman, 'A Typology of Rhetorical Questions', in *Syntax and Semantics Circle UC Berkeley*, 17 February 2006, pp. 1-10 (online article). Among other things, he remarks that a rhetorical question such as 'Who do you think you are?' 'evokes a scale which is populated by degrees of property that holds of individuals' (p. 5).

64. E.g. Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (trans. W. Jacob; Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1992), p. 61; German: *Das Buch Exodus* (ed. S. Mayer; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1997), pp. 54-55.

65. See Anna-Brita Stenström, *Questions and Responses: In English Conversation* (diss.; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1984), pp. 54-56; cf. Ferenc Kiefer, review of *Rhetorische Fragen (*Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), by Jörg Meibauer, *Journal of Pragmatics* 13 (1989), pp. 769-75, esp. 772-73.

66. See Carl M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle* kî (spec. issue JOTT; diss.; Dallas: SIL International, 2001), pp. 157, 279, 306, 314. He describes the general function of *kî* as 'mentioning' a propositional content within another context (pp. 144, 151-52, 303). About the *kî* of Exod. 3.11, see Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint*, p. 287.

67. For the divine presence and assistance formula (*Mitseinsformel* or *Beistandsformel*), see, e.g., Rüdiger Bartelmus, *HYH: Bedeutung und Funktion eines hebräischen 'Allerweltswortes'—zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage des hebräischen Tempussystems* (ATS, 17; orig. Habil.; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1982), pp. 155-60 and 190-95; John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 302-306; Donald E. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 54-75 (Chapter 3, 'I Will Be with You'; with references).

that Yhwh emphatically repeats here the words omitted by Moses.[68] The opposition to Moses' words is more in particular marked by the pronoun *'ānōkî*. The 'I' of the divine speaker stands in opposition to the 'I' of Moses inasmuch as the latter puts himself exclusively at the forefront as actor. Nevertheless, the exact wording of the description may point beyond this reminder and refer to the identity of the sender. What is more, the relation with the promise implies—like the signs in the other saviour narratives—that inasmuch as Moses really has to do with the person suggested, he may count on his support.

The function of the sign of Exod. 3.12 fits perfectly therefore into the story line.[69] It serves to underline the reintroduction of Yhwh as the one who is really engaged with Moses' mission and to reorientate Moses in this respect.

The problem of the sign lies in fact elsewhere, in *the configuration of the verse.* In this respect a comparison with the sign of Judges 6 is illuminating. There are striking resemblances between the two. There the function is also described by the words 'that [it is] I [who] have sent you', whereas assistance has been promised just before in the same words: '[The point is] that I will be with you.' The difference, however, is that in Judges 6 the promise and mention of the sign are distributed to different utterances, but follow immediately one after the other in a single utterance in Exodus 3. In fact, it is only because of the close connection that the sign causes difficulties in Exodus 3. Considered in itself, the description of the function of the sign and the description of the sign itself would not cause any problem: the future event of serving on the mount could certainly serve as confirmation that God is the instigator of the exodus and therefore can be called a sign (cf. the recognition sign, sec. 3). However, because the sign follows immediately after the promise of support, the sign is expected to happen before the completion of the undertaking; and that is the reason its actual character seems to be bizarre.

It remains therefore to be explained why this sign has been connected so closely with the promise of assistance.

68. After van Daalen, 'The Place Where YHWH Showed Himself', pp. 139-40.

69. Contra Jan Christian Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung* (FRLANT, 186; orig. Habil.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 292-93: he suggests that there is an obvious new onset of the text by the giving of a sign after the promise of support. Already the call pattern argues against this supposition. Note that this pattern also contradicts the understanding of the promise of support as the sign in question (for this view, see the introduction to the present chapter).

5. *The Nature of the Sign and That of the Narrative*

Let us approach the problem from another side. In the last section it was investigated how the alleged function of the sign is embedded in the immediate context; a different issue is the question how the sign itself as described *fits into the narrative as a whole.*

The sign is closely connected with the bush scene of vv. 1-6. The text describing the sign reads, 'when you [singular] have brought the people out of Egypt, you [plural] will serve God on this mountain.' 'This mountain' refers to 'the mountain of God, Horeb', in v. 1. As the location of the appearance of God, it appears in a sequence between 'behind the desert' (3.1) on the one hand and the *s^{e}ne* ('bush', 3.2-4) and 'holy ground' (3.5) on the other.

The serving (*'bd*) of God in 3.12 has in all probability a cultic connotation because of its location 'on the mountain' (cf., e.g., Deut. 12.2; Ezek. 20.40). This association is supported by the preceding prohibition to come nearer and the characterization of the place as 'holy ground' (3.5). In agreement with this supposition is also the fact that later in the narrative Yhwh speaks about sacrificing in the desert, when suggesting to Moses what reason for Israel's departure he should give to the king of Egypt (3.18). The designation of the place is more indefinite but that of the activity is more specific than in v. 12. In the speaking of Yhwh and Moses in the plagues narrative (Exodus 7-12) serving God alternates with sacrificing to him.

In vv. 2-4 the word *s^{e}ne* is used five times, although twice or thrice would have been enough. Moreover, already at its first occurrence it has a definite article. In all probability, this word alludes to something familiar, namely, to Sinai (*sinay*),[70] the word by which the book of Exodus describes later the place of meeting between Yhwh and the Israelites after the rescue from Egypt (19.11, 18, 20, 23; 24.16). Against this idea it could be adduced that chs. 19 and 24 speak about limitations set to the people for going up on the mountain (e.g. 19.12-13), whereas Exod. 3.12 refers to their serving 'on the mountain' of Exod. 3.12 apparently without any restriction. However, later on in ch. 19 the people are described as standing 'on the foot of the mountain' (19.17).[71] And in ch. 24 a covenant is made between Yhwh and

70. For similar allusions, see Yair Zakowitch, 'The Synonymous Word and Synonymous Name in Name-Midrashim', *Shnaton* 2 (1977), pp. 100-115 (Hebrew), Eng. summary, p. xxviii.

71. See Polak, 'Theophany and Mediator', p. 135 note. In this connection the interpretation of *b^{e}-taḥtît* is crucial; the substantive (lit. the 'underpart') is in this context a *hapax.* Polak: 'In any case, the term *b^{e}-taḥtît* implies some contact between the public and the mountain', something forbidden before (19.12). In favour of connecting the going on the mountain of v. 13 under certain conditions and the actual going of the people of vv. 16-17, it can also be argued that the different words used in these verses for

the Israelites, and after it their representatives meet him on the mountain. It is then that 'the mountain of God' is mentioned again (24.13).[72] Against this background the serving on the mount must refer to this episode.[73]

In view of the allusion to the Sinai event, the words employed are crucial. The transition from 'serving' to 'covenant' does not seem to be difficult. In the Hebrew Bible these words are often used in subsequent clauses, mostly (a) in antithetic but sometimes also in (b) synthetic ones.[74] However, also the designations of the participants are significant. In 3.12 the word 'people' is put in relationship to the word 'god'. The verse underlines this by speaking of '*the* people' instead of 'my people' (so in 3.7, 10) and even of 'the god', whereas 'me' would be expected in direct discourse.[75] In this respect a comparison with a clause in the prologue to the call narrative may be illuminating.

The second half of v. 2.23 reads: 'The Children of Israel groaned from the servitude, they cried out, and their plea-for-help went up to God, from the servitude.' The wording of the last clause is surprising. There is no talk of a prayer, but only of a cry for help going up to God on its own initiative, as it were. In this respect the people's serving of God on the mount contrasts clearly with this situation without a direct relation to God, a contrast underlined by the use of the same root, *'bd*, 'serve', in both cases.

It appears, therefore, that the sign of Exod. 3.12 is firmly embedded in the narrative of Exod. 3. The question may now be posed whether the features of the sign also agree with the nature of the narrative.

As already indicated, the narrative is a call narrative. However, it is certainly *not a simple call narrative.* It is noteworthy that elements of the call pattern are found not only in 3.9-12 but are repeated over the course of the narrative: there is a duplication of the commission (3.10, 16); there are five expressions of reserve (3.11, 13; 4.1, 10, 13); three assurances of support (3.12a; 4.12, 15); and signs are described in two different passages (3.12; 4.2-9).[76] The narrative of Exod. 2.23–4.17 is therefore an expanded call narrative.

wind instruments, *yôbēl* and *šôpār*, also alternate in Josh. 6.4 and next verses. This has been noted by R. Althann, 'A Note on Exodus 19.12aB-13', *Bib* 57 (1976), pp. 242-46.

72. Cf. 4.27 and 18.5, where it marks important meetings.

73. Cf. Berge, *Reading Sources*, pp. 128-29, 202.

74. See (a) Deut. 17.2-3; 29.24-25; 31.20; Josh. 23.16; Judg. 2.19-20; 2 Kgs 17.15-16; Jer. 11.10; 22.9; and (b) Exod. 23.32-33; 1 Sam. 11.1; Isa. 56.6; 2 Chron. 34.32-33, respectively.

75. Such a self reference by title puts the public aspect (the official status) of speakers and not their personal aspect at the forefront. See Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, sec. 27.2.3, p. 352 (quoting notably 2 Sam. 19.20).

76. This observation is borrowed from Georg Fischer, but adapted. See Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott: Sprache, Aufbau und Erzähltechnik in der Berufung des Mose*

There are, however, other elements that are not immediately connected with the call pattern:

- the prologue (2.23-25). By its very nature the prologue has a supplementary function. It prepares the narrative by telling about an important development on the ground (the death of the king of Egypt but without any change in the situation of the Israelites) and its sequel in heaven (God taking notice of the situation).
- the burning bush scene at the beginning (3.1-6). It depicts the first confrontation of Moses with God.
- the question about the divine name and its answers (3.13-15). This subject will be discussed extensively in the next chapter.
- the discourse in 3.16-22. This is an outline of what will happen in Egypt and what should then be done. The discourse shows the providential care of Israel by Yhwh in connection with the exodus from Egypt.
- the addition of Aaron to the mission of Moses (4.14-16). Although this addition doubles the call pattern to a certain extent, the reason for this is not clear in relation to this pattern.

As a call narrative, the story lays the foundation of what is narrated afterwards. Many of the particular features mentioned are in fact associated with this character. The description of Aaron as 'your Levitical brother' in 4.14 is exemplary. (The usual translation 'your brother, the Levite' should be rejected because 'the Levite' would then function as a distinguishing feature, but in relation to Moses that is incomprehensible: the latter has according to 2.1-10 a Levitical background.) He is subsequently presented to Moses as his spokesman before the people (4.15-16a). Within the story this qualification points presumably to (a) the solidarity between the Levites as tribesmen, but to the reader it also alludes to (b) the later position of the Levites as interpreters of the (Mosaic) Torah, and thus clarifies the need for adding Aaron to the mission of Moses.[77] Also the last verses of the discourse of 3.16-22 exceed the story in meaning and hint at future regulations about slavery: if, unexpectedly, people lapse into slavery, they should be compensated when released after some time (Deut. 15.12-18).[78] All these elements

(Ex 3–4) (OBO, 91; diss.; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 50-52.

77. See (a) Num. 18.6; Deut. 18.7; Ezra 3.9; 1 Chron. 6.33/48; 2 Chron. 29.34; 35.15; and (b) e.g. Deut. 33.8-10; 2 Chron. 35.3; esp. Neh. 8.1-12, respectively.

78. Thus at least in line with Roland Gradwohl, '*Niṣṣal* und *hiṣṣîl* als Rechtsbegriffe im Sklavenrecht', *ZAW* 111 (1999), pp. 187-95 (referring to Gen. 31.9,16—with the hif'il of *nṣl*). Whether *nṣl* in itself has juridical connnotations may, however, be doubted. Cf. 2 Chron. 20.25, with a pi'el form as in Exod. 3.22.

concern the perspective of the mission of Moses as seen by Yhwh: it is not only a matter of a rescue of Israel from Egypt and a move to a better country but also one of new relationships between him and the people.

In this context the sign of Exod. 3.12 fits very well. Indeed, whereas the other verses point to the new relationships by allusion, this sign refers to them explicitly. Moreover, the sign puts pre-eminently at the forefront what matters to Yhwh.

6. *Final Remarks*

It is now possible to integrate the findings and push the conclusions a little further:

(1) The peculiarity of the sign of Exod. 3.12 is that it will only happen after the event in question: the serving of God by the people on the mountain Horeb–Sinai will take place only after the exodus from Egypt. The problem of the sign of Exod. 3.12 is sometimes solved by referring to other signs that would be similar. This reference appeared, however, to be incorrect, even in the case of two peculiar Isaianic signs (Isa. 7.14 and 2 Kgs 19.29 = Isa. 37.30). The only comparable phenomenon was found in the recognition saying. With this saying the sign of Exod. 3.12 shares the feature of a specific knowledge after the event, namely the attribution of an event because of its particularity to the action of Yhwh. In the case of a recognition saying this event is sometimes also called a sign. Possibly the phenomenon of the recognition saying has facilitated the change in the nature of the call sign. This would even be more probable if ch. 3 would presuppose ch. 6, as has been proposed with good arguments against current views.[79] In any case, the similarity of the sign of 3.12 with the recognition saying of 6.6-7 is striking: in both a strong connection is made between the exodus of Israel from Egypt under God's guidance and becoming his people.

(2) In this chapter also other elements were mentioned that contribute to an explanation of the sign in Exod. 3.12:

(a) The application of the call pattern, according to which the sign should occur at the place given.

79. See Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT, 81; orig. Habil.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999), pp. 197-209. Cf., however, the counterarguments of Thomas Christian Römer, 'Exodus 3-4 und die aktuelle Pentateuchdiskussion', in R. Roukema (ed.), *The Interpretation of Exodus* (Festschrift C. Houtman; CBET, 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 65-79, esp. 68-70.

(b) The usual connection of the function of the signs in narratives of calls of saviours (Judg. 6; 1 Sam. 9-10), not directly with the success of the execution of the commission, but with the divine instigation of it. The idea is that if the latter appears to be true, then the success of the undertaking is guaranteed.

(c) The firm connection it makes between two fundamental data of Israel's salvation (hi)story, the exodus from Egypt and the Sinai covenant. In this respect the nature of the sign is in agreement with the constitutive nature of the narrative: the narrative is not a simple call narrative but, as shown in the previous section, presents over and above this an outline of Israel's founding narrative.[80]

(3) The close connection between the sign, the promise of involvement, and their function in the narrative is a cornerstone of the explanation of the sign. As we have seen, the promise of support and the description of the sign function reintroduce Yhwh as a major player, if not the principal actor, in the dialogue with Moses. In fact, the sign itself continues the intended reorientation of Moses and makes it entirely clear that the aim of the exodus seen from God's point of view is not simply the liberation from Egyptian servitude or life in a good country but also new relationships within the context of the covenant of God.[81]

(4) It should be noted that the interpretation given of the sign also makes sense within the story. Yhwh appears to be profoundly involved with Moses' mission, the bringing of the Israelites out of Egypt, for in it his position as god of this people is at stake.[82] It is finally this involvement that may raise the confidence of Moses even before the exodus takes place, indeed already during the commissioning. Moreover, the theocentric orientation of the answer also paves the way for the question by Moses about the divine name (see next chapter).

80. Cf. R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (OBT; orig. lecture; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 25. In connection with the call narrative, Moberley refers to several 'first phenomena' as the first reference to the mountain of God, the first use of the language of holiness in relation to God, the first depiction of the commissioning of a prophet, and the first disclosure of the divine name.

81. Cf. Jacob, *Exodus*, p. 63 (German, 57): 'Sinai is an even more important goal than Canaan; HE will be their eternal home (*ihre ewige Heimat*).' Similarly Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (HBI; New York: Behrhouse, 1969), p. 78.

82. Cf. Rylaarsdam, 'Exodus', p. 874: 'It [the promise of the sign] stresses the theocentric character or cosmic significance of the Exodus. God is not merely going to fulfil Moses' defeated hopes or ease the burden of slaves; he is going to establish a people for himself.'

(5) Since readers more or less identify with the character of the story, the sign will function as a hint to them that the exodus from Egypt and the events of covenant-making and law-giving of Sinai are connected from the beginning. In this respect the verse prepares the transition from the first half of the book of Exodus to the second half. The connection between the two motives is also elsewhere expressed (see also, e.g., the opening words of the Decalogue, 20.2) and may indeed be considered as fundamental for the Pentateuch as a whole. The formulation of the sign functions therefore as the first expression of this 'canon builder'.

2

The Prophetic Core of the Divine Name: On Exodus 3.14a, Its Context and Syntax

13 Moses said to God:
Look, I am coming to the Children of Israel
and say to them:
'The God of your fathers has sent me to you',
they will say to me: 'What [is] his name?'—
what [then] shall I say to them?
14a God said to Moses:
… .. … (*'ehye 'ašer 'ehye*).
b And he said:
'Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel:
Ehyeh (*'ehye*) has sent me to you.'
15a God said further to Moses:
Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel:
'Yhwh, the God of your fathers,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob,
has sent me to you'—
b this [is] my name for ever
and this [is] my memorability-title from generation to generation.
Exod. 3.13-15

The significance of the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a does not need to be proven. The statement has always been of critical interest in the theological discussion about who or what God is. However, its meaning still needs to be clarified. It has caused a bewildering range of interpretations, and even the usual rendering, 'I am who I am', is definitely not the only one. On the other hand, some issues seem to return constantly, such as the question whether

the divine statement affirms God's presence or just signifies his refusal to reveal himself more closely.[1]

When considering the vast number of interpretations, and observing that even one's own interpretation changes in the course of time, one can ask whether any objectivity is possible. This question becomes even more pregnant in the light of the fact that interpretations of the divine statement are related to one's theological conceptions and as such are heavily loaded. Does the text offer any resistance to our interpretations (the text as *Gegenstand*)? Or is it intentionally vague and open to multiple interpretations?[2] These questions can be answered only by examining carefully and systematically all the factors that influence the meaning of the statement. At the same time methodical mistakes should be avoided as, for instance, the common one of piling one likely explanation on another (but probable plus probable equals more improbable!). Instead, we should rather look for features pointing in the same direction.

The study of the syntax of Exod. 3.14a is the way par excellence of getting more objectivity in the approach to the divine statement. Investigations of the function of the words involved—the verb *hyh*, 'to be', and the relative particle *ʾᵃšer,* 'that'/'who'/'what'—have produced significant results. Studies of the syntax of the whole sentence have also provided valuable clues to a better understanding. Nevertheless, these issues need a critical review.

The context of the divine statement also requires a careful re-examination. It indicates what is at stake in the statement. Since it is an answer to the question of Moses in v. 13, the nature of the relationship between answer and question is particularly relevant. Also, the use of the same verb form *ʾehye* in the previous answer in v. 12 may warrant attention. On closer inspection, it is also striking that in both cases God talks at first about himself in the first person but subsequently in the third person (as 'God'

1. This issue is already indicated by the title of an article by Magne Saebø, 'Offenbarung oder Verhüllung? Bemerkungen zum Charakter des Gottesnamens in Ex 3,13-15', in J. Jeremias and L. Perlitt, *Die Botschaft und die Boten* (Festschrift H. Wolff; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), pp. 43-55; cf. Josef Schreiner, 'Soll man Ex 3,14 als unbedingtes Heilswort übersetzen?', in J.J. Degenhardt, E. Beck and E. Sitarz (eds.), *Die Freude an Gott: Unsere Kraft* (Festschrift O.B. Knoch; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991), pp. 37-46.

2. For the divine response as 'mit Absicht vage', see Werner H. Schmidt, *Exodus*, I (BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), p. 177 (adding: 'wenn auch nicht inhaltsleer'); as 'vieldeutig', Georg Beer, *Exodus* (HAT; Tübingen: Mohr, 1939), p. 29; as 'intentionally ambiguous', William M. Schniedewind, 'Calling God Names: An Inner-Biblical Approach to the Tetragrammaton', in D.A. Green and L.S. Lieber (eds.), *Scriptural Exegesis: The Shapes of Culture and the Religious Imagination* (Festschrift M. Fishbane; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 74-86, esp. 80 (he connects the 'ambiguity' of the sentence with religious needs in the [post-]exilic period).

in v. 12; as 'Yhwh' in v. 15). Is this agreement in structure only superficial or does it indicate more? In any case, clarification of the relation of the statement to the context offers much to gain, also with a view to objectivity. Of course, syntax is also important in this matter; but, as we deal here with the relationship of the divine statement to the question of Moses, we have to go beyond the sentence level and look for specific features on the discourse level.

In summary, as always, we should try to suspend premature judgments about the content of the statement as much as possible. This chapter will do this as follows.[3] It will first attempt to define the precise context of the sentence, including the nature of the question of Moses. This part will have the form of a search process. After that, the formal features of the statement will be studied, the syntax of the sentence and the relationship of this answer to Moses' question; and this will be done as systematically and rigorously as possible. All this will result in a new position on the interpretation of the divine statement.

1. *The Coherence of the Text*

In Exod. 3.13 Moses puts the question of how to respond when asked for the name of his sender. The statement of 3.14a is not the only response of God to this question; he also answers (3.14b): 'Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: "Ehyeh has sent me to you"'; and (3.15a) 'Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: "Yhwh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you."'

The classical analysis of this text (Exod. 3.13-15) is that of source criticism.[4] The point of departure consists of some observations. There is only

3. This chapter is already my fourth publication about Exod. 3.13-15. The first was: 'De naam van de god van de profeten: Exodus 3:13-15', *ACEBT* 12 (1993), pp. 38-61. The second, an expansion of the first, was published under the same title as ch. 6 of my dissertation, *Het zonderlinge karakter van de godsnaam: Literaire, theologische en psychoanalytische aspecten van het roepingsverhaal van Mozes (Exodus 2.23-4.17)* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum 1996), pp. 85-129. The exegesis there evolves through the exposition of a critical, syntax- and context-orientated classification of existing exegeses of Exod. 3.14a. The present chapter is similar in design to the third publication: 'The Prophetic Dimension of the Divine Name: On Exodus 3.14a and its Context', *CBQ* 64 (2002), pp. 213-28. However, it revises most of it more or less substantially, expanding some discussions even considerably.

4. See Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, pp. 130-34, cf. 168-79; Andrés Ibáñez Arana, 'Ex 3,14a, explicación de un nombre singular: YHWH', *Estudios bíblicos* 57 (1999), pp. 375-88, esp. 376-77; Hubert Irsigler, 'Von der Namensfrage zum Gottesverständnis. Exodus 3,13-15 im Kontext der Glaubensgeschichte Israels', *BN* 96 (1999), pp. 56-96, esp. 61-66 (all authors with additional references).

one speaker, but there are three introductions to the speech, one for each answer: 'God said to Moses' (3.14a); 'And he said' (3.14b); and 'God said further to Moses' (3.15). Moreover, the second and third answers are very similar. All this usually leads to the conclusion that this triple answer is overcrowded. The next step in this approach concerns the question whether the answer of v. 14a was the original answer or just that of v. 15a, a question leading to different conclusions.

The arguments for this approach are not self-evident. The evaluation that the triple answer is overloaded runs the risk of being highly subjective. What matters more is that repetition is not necessarily superfluous, but may emphasize the solemn nature of a statement. And although multiple introductions to a speech are sometimes an indication of the combination of different sources, they function primarily as a rhetorical device in other texts.[5] With reference to the text in question, it should be noted that the answers given cannot be read immediately one after the other. In this respect the speech introductions could have a useful function: at least they might distinguish the different answers and establish a certain relationship between them. The question whether this is indeed the case here can be established only by an accurate analysis of these answers and the function of the introductions in relation to them.

The incongruity between the request for a name and God's first answer in Exod. 3.13-14 is sometimes also adduced as an indication that the answer belongs to a source different from that of the question.[6] However, the difficulty of the transition could also argue against such a difference in sources.[7] The problem of the idea is particularly that the nature of the first answer is not as clear as seems to be presupposed. The answer is mostly taken as the explanation of the divine name. However, there is nothing in the text, nor any pre-given pattern, that requires such an interpretation. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the explanation of a name most often follows the naming (e.g. Exod. 2.10, 22; cf. also 33.19). In only a few other cases does the

5. See esp. E. J. Revell, 'The Repetition of Introductions to Speech as a Feature of Biblical Hebrew', *VT* 47 (1997), pp. 91-110; further Georg Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott: Sprache, Aufbau und Erzähltechnik in der Berufung des Mose (Ex 3-4)* (OBO, 91; diss.; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 41-45; Moshé Anbar, 'Formule d'introduction du discours direct au milieu du discours à Mari et dans la Bible', *VT* 47 (1997), pp. 530-36.

6. Sean McEvenue, 'The Speaker(s) in Ex 1-15', in McEvenue, G. Braulik and W. Gross (eds.), *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel* (Festschrift N. Lohfink; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1993), pp. 220-36, esp. 227-28 (he observes: 'The evidence for this [break] is not compelling' but refers then to other seams in the chapter).

7. Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, p. 131: 'Spricht aber nicht gerade dieser Tatbestand gemäss der Regel, dass ein sperriger Text im Laufe der Geschichte geglättet wird (*lectio ardua praestat procliviori*), gegen diese Lösung?'

description of an event or emotion move on to the giving of a name.[8] In these cases, however, the event or emotion is embedded in the entire situation, and thus there is no flaw in the story line. The interpretation of the answer in Exod. 3.14a as the explanation of a name can therefore not be taken for granted.

Some authors attempt to deal with the transition from Moses' request to God's first answer in Exod. 3.13-14 by interpreting the request as one for the meaning of the divine name (see sec. 2.3), or by understanding the answer as a combination of a name and the explanation of that name (e.g. 'Ehyeh, for I am'; see sec. 2.6.1). More often, however, the statement is taken as an evasive answer ('I may be whoever I may be').[9] A quite different approach argues that just as in Exod. 3.13-14a elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible the connection between question and answer is often not as logical as we would like (see, e.g., Gen. 31.31; Exod. 7.1; Judg. 13.13). This feature could be related to oriental narrative style.[10] Nevertheless, even in that case we can ask ourselves what (semantic or pragmatic) logic underlies the transition.

As a method, source criticism has at least the merit of making us more sensitive to tensions and unexpected transitions in the text. However, although Exod. 3.13-15 is probably not written within one hour or a single day, the question remains whether the text offers enough clues to reconstruct its genesis. In this respect the endless discussion whether v. 14 or v. 15 was the original answer to the request for the name is a bad sign.[11] Every argument seems to be balanced by another. This suggests that the verses in question can better be approached from another point of view.[12] Moreover, even in the case one considers for instance v. 14a to be a later addition to

8. Gen. 25.30; 29.33-35; 30.6-8, 11-13, 18-20. On the two types of explanations of names, see A. S. van der Woude, s.v. '*šēm*', in E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.), *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament,* III (trans. M.E. Biddle; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), pp. 1348-67, esp. 1355.

9. See, e.g., Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, I (trans. J. Rebel and S. Woudstra ; HCOT; Kampen: Kok, 1993), p. 95; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1999), pp. 205, 225. See also secs. 2 and 6f below.

10. G.J. Thierry, 'The Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton', *OTS* 5 (1948), pp. 30-42, esp. 37.

11. Pro v. 14: Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, pp. 131-34; and Ibáñez, 'Ex 3,14a, explicación de YHWH', pp. 376-77; pro v. 15: Martin Noth, *Das zweite Buch Mose: Exodus* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), p. 30; and Irsigler, 'Von der Namensfrage zum Gottesverständnis', pp. 65-66 (for further references, see esp. Schmidt).

12. In line with Meir Sternberg (1985), Paul R. Noble argues that 'for most [biblical] texts a mixture of synchronic and diachronic considerations are needed to account for all their features'. See Noble, *The Canonical Approach: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hermeneutics of Brevard Childs* (BibIntS 16; orig. diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), p. 170. This may be said in general, but not for a case such as Exod. 3.13-15, in which the text does not seem to give sufficient hold for a diachronic approach.

the text, one has to reflect about the question whether this addition is more or less occasioned by the pre-given text.[13] The question is therefore whether v. 14 has a function within the story or not. This issue argues for a more synchronic, literary approach.

2. *Theophanies and the Question of the Divine Name*

Let us first, however, deal with another usual, namely a comparative (form-critical and/or religion-historical motivated), approach to the verses in question. The aforementioned interpretation of Exod. 3.14a as an evasive reply is often supported by referring to similar sequences in other theophanies. The responses to the requests for the name in Gen. 32.30 and Judg. 13.17 are indeed usually understood as evasive replies, if not refusals.[14] The counter-question posed in both cases, 'Why do you ask for my name?', seems to suggest this. Moreover, the supplemental answer 'it is *pel'î*' in Judg. 13.18 is sometimes understood as meaning 'it is ineffable'.[15] The response would be evasive because, according to the current view at the time, if a spiritual power reveals its name it would come under the control of others (see sec. 2.5a, at point II).[16] Let us consider both responses more fully within their contexts and see whether there exists a pattern and whether this includes Exod. 3.14.

In Genesis 32, Jacob struggles with a mysterious 'man' during the night. At the end of the struggle Jacob asks this person to bless him (v. 27). It indicates that he has recognized the particular and superior status of this

13. Cf. Schniedewind, 'Calling God Names', p. 81: he sees 'typical markers of an interpretative insertion' in 3.14, namely signs of a *Wiederaufnahme,* a resumptive repetition. Schniedewind makes it therefore to an instance of a more general phenomenon. However, this verse does not fall under the usual conception of resumptive repetition because in this case the repetition would be a matter of preparing what comes after the passage in question (14b and 15a respectively), instead of resuming what has been said before it (cf., e.g., 6.26-30 with 6.12-13). Moreover, resumptive repetition is in the first place a literary phenomenon, which is only secondarily used for additions by editors. See for these remarks Philip A. Quick, 'Resumptive Repetition: A Two-Edged Sword', *JOTT* 6 (1993), pp. 289-316. The idea that 3.14a is an insertion leads Schniedewind subsequently to interpret it in relative isolation from the context. In my view, however, a native reader would miss something if v. 15 immediately follows v. 13 (see sec. 5b, last part).

14. See A.-M. Dubarle, 'La signification du nom de Iahweh', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 35 (1951), pp. 3-21, esp. 7; Propp*, Exodus 1-18*, pp. 223-24.

15. See George F. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. 321 (translation).

16. Thus, many commentaries following Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (GHK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn, 1910), p. 362.

person.[17] When the latter asks Jacob, 'What is your name?', the answer is simply, 'Jacob' (v. 28). The other person responds then, 'Your name will no longer be called Jacob but Israel because you have fought with God and men and have prevailed' (v. 29). Such a renaming also presupposes the authority of this person.[18] The response brings the word 'god' into the conversation for the first time, but since this response refers to God / gods (*'elōhîm*) and man / people (*'anāšîm*) at the same time, the explanation of the new name Israel characterizes Jacob's life only in general, probably as a struggle for blessing (cf. Genesis 27). The response of the other person still leaves therefore open his identity. When Jacob requests, 'Let me know your name, will you' (imperative + *nā'*), he gets the counter-question already quoted (v. 30). In any case, this reply breaks clearly the symmetry of the exchange. It is only after this reply that Jacob is blessed. He brings the issue of identity to a close with the exclamation, 'I have seen God face to face and my life was saved' (v. 31; the use of *'elōhîm* without object marker and without article may suggest some uncertainty about the identity of the other person but this seems to be cleared away by the phrase *pānîm 'el pānîm*, 'face to face').

In Judges 13, someone has appeared to the wife of Manoah and announced to her the birth of a saviour, Samson. The narrator always refers to the visitor as the 'messenger (*mal'ak*) of Yhwh' or 'of God', thus, a sort of angel. However, the woman describes him to her husband as a 'man of God', thus, as a prophet. When the messenger reappears, Manoah proposes preparing a goat (for a meal; v. 15). The former refuses to eat but, instead, suggests making an offering to Yhwh. The narrator then adds, 'For Manoah did not know that he was Yhwh's messenger' (v. 16). This sentence underlines the idea that the answer was an attempted correction. It also throws a certain light on Manoah's utterance that follows: 'What is your name? For if your word comes out, then we can honour you' (v. 17). In this context the messenger's next answer is apparently a new attempt to correct Manoah's misunderstanding. The counter-question, 'Why do you ask for my name?', is now followed by the statement: 'It [is] *pel'î*' (v. 18). The last word is best taken as a description of something transcending human power and knowl-

17. Cf. Irmtraud Fischer, 'Der erkämpfte Segen (Gen. 32,23-33)', *Bible und Kirche* 58 (2003), pp. 99-107, esp. 100: 'die Beziehung, die sich im Segnen und Gesegnet-Werden ausdrückt, ist eine, die Autoritätsverhältnisse ausdrücklich bejaht. Eine Person um den Segen zu bitten, heisst, sie als Autorität, die diesen geben kann, anzuerkennen.' In her article, this is, however, only a preliminary remark; her interpretation itself of the dialogue between Jacob and his interlocutor remains rather traditional.

18. See Otto Eissfeldt, 'Renaming in the Old Testament', in P.R. Ackroyd and B. Lindars (eds.), *Words and Meanings* (Festschrift D.W. Thomas; London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 69-79, esp. 70.

edge and as such astonishing ('wonderful'; see esp. Ps. 139.6; also Judg. 13.19).[19] In all probability this word does not qualify the name in question but the person involved, and indicates his extraordinary, if not superhuman, status.[20] The supplemental answer seems therefore to shift from the name (in Hebrew: *šēm*) as vocable to the name as referring to the reputation of the person in question.[21] The fear of having to die from seeing God is also expressed subsequently, more clearly even than in Genesis 32 and different from there also explicitly contradicted.

The nature of the answer by means of the counter-question in Genesis 32 and Judges 13 is not easy to define. In any case, although having the form of a question, it is not really a request for information. However, its rhetorical nature does not give us the right to immediately interpret it as an evasive reply, in which case the speaker would be reluctant to give information. What is important is that, as in other biblical stories, in these two narratives the identity of the other person is not completely left in the dark, but the human protagonist recognizes his identity after the disappearance of this other person.[22] The initial uncertainty about his identity is in fact a rather typical element of theophany narratives (see also Chapter 1, sec. 4). Within this context the counter-question may be conceived as a helping hand for becoming aware of that identity. The counter-question reads literally, 'Wherefore [is] this [that] you ask for my name?' The opening of the sentence by *lāmmâ ze* has a focusing function and seems to stress that in this case asking for the name is not so self-evident ('wherefore then', *warum doch*; cf. esp. 1 Sam. 20.8—also followed by a preformative verb form in the second person).[23] More specifically, this sentence can be interpreted in

19. Moore, *Judges*, pp. 321 (explanation of the text), 322 (about the root *pl'*).

20. In connection with the word *šēm*, 'name', adjectives may also indicate divine status elsewhere. See Exod. 34.14; Isa. 57.15; Mal. 1.11; Ps. 99.3.

21. For this meaning, see, e.g., Allen P. Ross, s.v. *šēm*, in W.A. Van Gemeren (ed.), *NIDOTTE, IV,* pp. 147-51, esp. 148.

22. Fredrik Lindström, *God and the Origin of Evil: A Contextual Analysis of Alleged Monistic Evidence in the Old Testament* (ConBOT 21; diss., Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1983), pp. 29-30.

23. Ronald T. Hyman suggests on the basis of Genesis that a *lāmmâ*-question is critical/corrective toward the addressee or expressive/emotive, whereas a *maddûa'*-question would only seek information. See Hyman, 'Fielding "Why" Questions in Genesis', *HAR* 11 (1987), pp. 173-83. However, the difference will not be so clear-cut; one of the only two *maddûa'*-questions in Genesis, namely that of 26.27 (cf. p. 175), seems to be critical too, while the indeed critical *lāmmâ*-question of 31.27 in principle also seeks information (cf. pp. 177-78). For a further criticism of such a view see James Barr, 'Why? in Biblical Hebrew', *JTS* n.s. 36 (1985), pp. 1-33. However, Hyman's analyses of *lāmmâ*-questions are often perceptive, for instance his remark that the critical nature of a 'why' question is often supported by another, a yes/no question. He indicates further that such questions are often equivalent to the statement

two senses. The counter-question could call into question whether there is any cause to ask for the name.[24] The implicit message is that the addressees can know it.[25] It could also question whether it is really proper to ask for the name.[26] The suggestion is then that this not appropriate because of the superior, if not superhuman, status of the speaker: one should also not ask a king for his name![27] The latter interpretation seems to be most appropriate because of the implicit role of position differences in Genesis 32 and especially in view of the supplemental answer in Judges 13, which refers to the particular status of the speaker. It may now be clear that the counter-question is not so much an evasive reply as an indirect disclaimer, disputing the relevance of the request for the name.[28] The attitude of the speaker is therefore not reluctant but communicative: the counter-question clearly attempts to correct and reorientate the human protagonist.

These findings cannot be applied straightforwardly to the question in Exod. 3.13 because there are important differences. First of all, in Exod. 3.13 the name is not asked by the human protagonist himself as in Genesis 32 and in Judges 13; but he, Moses, puts the question in the mouth

'there is no good reason for . . .' (see esp. at Gen. 47.15, p. 176-77); this also applies in fact to that of Gen. 18.13 (see pp. 175, 176, 178-79), also a *lāmmâ ze* question put by God like that of Gen. 32.30 (see main text).

24. According to the classification of 'replies', that is, responses to the performative aspect of a question ('replies' stand as a linguistic category in opposition to that of 'answers', i.e., responses to its contents), by Walter Weyne, it would concern in this case a reply on the illocutionary level, notably a 'mise en question de l'ignorance'. His rather formal classification is based on the speech act theory of J.R. Searle (main division: acts on the enunciative, propositional, illocutionary or perlocutionary level). See Weyne, 'L'implicite dans le couple question–réponse: la réplique au "contenant" implicite', *Travaux de linguistique* (Université de Gand) 28 (1994), pp. 113-31, esp. 119.

25. Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 336: it 'is another way of asking, "Jacob, don't you realize who I am?"' He also notes on the same page: 'The text contains no evidence that Jacob desires to know the name of his adversary so that he might exercise power over him.'

26. It would then concern a reply on the propositional level, namely a 'réplique au prétendu droit à l'acte propositionnel'; the reply indicates in particular that it is not appropriate to raise the topic concerned in relation to the referent (predicative aspect). See Weyne, 'L'implicite dans le couple question', pp. 124-25.

27. With reference to Gen. 32.30 but also to Exod. 3.14 and Judg. 13.18 Joachim Becker notes: 'der Autoritätsbewusste weist sie [die direkte Frage nach dem Namen] zurück.' See Becker, 'Zur "Ich bin"-Formel im Alten Testament', *BN* 98 (1999), pp. 45-54, esp. 47.

28. Cf. M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976), p. 213 (the authors take it, however, as only a matter of evasion; see table 9, p. 207); Anna-Brita Stenström, *Questions and Responses: In English Conversation* (diss.; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1984), pp. 63-64 (she distinguishes between the two kinds of responses but in a different way).

of others, the Israelites. What is more, the question occurs in a different context. Whereas it is clear in Judges 13 (in Genesis it remains much more implicit) that the interlocutor is still considered a human being and therefore the name is apparently asked out of ignorance, in Exodus 3 he has already revealed himself as a (certain) god (v. 6). The motif of a heavenly messenger is accordingly much less important and in fact plays a role only in the beginning of the call narrative.[29] At the moment the only agreement that can be noted between the response of Exod. 3.14a and those of the heavenly being in Genesis 32 and Judges 13 is that in all cases it apparently shifts the attention, but such a conclusion remains only very general.

3. *Analysis of the Question of Moses*

Let us now pay close attention to the request for the name in Exod. 3.13 itself and the ways it can be understood. After that, the question can better be answered how exactly the divine statement in v. 14a is related to it.

As indicated above (sec. 1), the request is sometimes interpreted as asking for the meaning of the divine name.[30] This view can, however, be contested on the basis of similar cases. In Gen. 32.28, the question is identical to that in Exod. 3.13: 'What (*ma*) [is] your name?' We have already observed that the answer there is simply a name: 'Jacob'. This is significant; the fact that in Genesis 32 the name is subsequently altered into another ('Israel') of which the meaning is explained does not really change the matter. Such a renaming presupposes a change in the relationships in which the person in question has been put.[31] The additional explanation that Jacob has 'prevailed' in his struggle with God and people fits this point. Consequently, the meaning of the name Jacob is only secondarily at stake and then primarily as indicating

29. For different approaches to the divine messenger in Exod. 3.2, see, e.g., Frank H. Polak, 'The Messenger of God and the Dialectic of Revelation', in Polak and Y. Hoffman (eds.), *A Light for Jacob: Studies in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Festschrift J.S. Licht; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1997), pp. 14-30, esp. 25-26; Alexander A. Fischer, 'Moses and the Exodus-Angel', in F.V. Reiterer, T. Nicklas and K. Schöpflin (eds.), *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings—Origins, Development and Reception* (DCLY 2007; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 79-93, esp. 79-82.

30. E.g. Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (trans. W. Jacob; Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1992), pp. 65-71 (at the end referring to Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed,* I, 63). Because the translation of Jacob's book unfortunately shows many inaccuracies, references to this translation will always be combined with references to the German edition, *Das Buch Exodus* (ed. S. Mayer; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1997); for the present matter, see pp. 59-64. About the interpretation of the request for a name in the sense concerned, see also J.A. Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name* (Tyndale OT Lecture; London: Tyndale, 1959), pp. 17-21; Yehuda T. Radday, '"Wie ist sein Name?" (Ex 3:13)', *Linguistica biblica* 58 (1986), pp. 87-104, esp. 91-93, 102-103.

31. As may be inferred from the study of Eissfeldt, 'Renaming', pp. 69-79 passim.

his state until then. The explanations of this name given earlier (Gen. 25.26; 27.36) are therefore only indirectly implied. In Prov. 30.4, the request for a name reads: 'What [is] his name?' This question is parallel to and resumes preceding rhetorical 'who' questions: who, that is, which human being, has done things like 'gathering the wind in the hollow of his hand'? The implied answer is nobody; nobody can be mentioned in this connection. On the basis of the two other biblical examples of this type of question it can therefore be stated that the question asks for a vocable, just a name. Whether this is always the case depends on whether such a sentence concerns a fixed phrase. This cannot be taken for granted. In principle a nominal clause consisting of *mâ* (or *ma*) and a definite noun phrase may also refer to meaning (e.g. the question asking for the meaning of the Pesach rituals: 'What [is] this service to you?'—Exod. 12.26). On the other hand, in such a situation the matter concerned (in the example: 'service') has been mentioned before. This is, however, not the case for the divine name in Exodus 3; the question should therefore be understood first of all as a request for a vocable.[32]

Sometimes Moses is seen as hiding his own interest in the divine name behind the question of the Israelites (correspondingly, God's answer might be viewed as piercing this masking because of its explicit address: 'God said *to Moses*').[33] However, this is not self-evident. We should take into consideration the complex nature of Moses' whole utterance and not jump to a conclusion.

Moses starts with the word *hinnê* (traditionally translated as: 'behold!'). In line with its basic deictic function, the word, in connection with a participle, points here to actions and events that are about to happen.[34] It introduces

32. See the critical review of the whole issue by Augustin Rudolf Müller, *Martin Bubers Verdeutschung der Schrift* (ATS, 14; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1982), pp. 80-93. He also deals with the *mî*-question in Judg. 13.17. This is a 'fusion of the two constructions'; thus P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Gregorian University Press and Biblical Press, rev. edn, 2006, sec. 144b note (cf. Paul Joüon, 1st edn, 1923: a 'contamination'). See also R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (OBT; orig. lecture; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992, p. 60 (note): he notes against other authors that the usage of *mî* in Judg. 13.17 does not imply that *mâ* cannot be used for asking a name, and refers further to the occurrence of the latter particle in some manuscripts according to the critical edition (*Biblia hebraica Stuttgartensia*) of the text. See further Kåre Berge, *Reading Sources in a Text: Coherence and Literary Criticism in the Call of Moses* (ATS, 54; St.Ottilien: EOS, 1997), pp. 108-10.

33. In this sense more or less, e.g., W. Gunther Plaut, *Exodus* (The Torah: A Modern Commentary, 2; New York: Union of Hebrew Congregations, 1983), pp. 31, 40-41.

34. Cf. C.H. J. van der Merwe, 'A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on *hinnê* in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth', *HS* 48 (2007), pp. 101-40, esp. 127-28 (note); cf. 138-39 (about the use of the participle).

these as newsworthy information for the addressee. Moses first depicts his arrival at the Israelites as about to take place ('I am coming to the Israelites') and then describes how a conversation between him and them will pass. He will introduce himself to the Israelites: 'I will say to them: "The God of your fathers has sent me to you."' This will lead them to ask for the divine name: 'They will say to me: "What (*ma*) [is] his name?"' It becomes subsequently clear that *hinnê* not only has a deictic function but also serves as a discourse marker. In this specific situation, the would-be question of the Israelites prompts Moses to his direct question to God: 'what [then] shall I say to them?'[35] Therefore, as is often the case, the information given provides the ground for a speech act.[36]

We can now observe that there are two communicative levels: the level of the conversation between God and Moses and the level of the future, imagined conversation between Moses and the Israelites. These levels should not be conflated beforehand by supposing too quickly that Moses hides his own question behind that of the Israelites. For the sake of completeness, it should also be noted that there is a third communicative level: the speech introduction 'Moses said to God' is a communication from the narrator to the reader.[37] In the end everything has to do with this third level.

It is noteworthy that the direct question of Moses, 'What shall I say to them?', allows in principle different answers.[38] The answer could be a straightforward answer to what prompted his direct question, that is, the request for a name by the Israelites (i.e. an answer on the propositional level). However, the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a does not give a direct answer to the request because, as a complex sentence, it cannot be a name.[39] Moreover, as we will later see (sec. 6a), its interpretation as a name fol-

35. For other *hinnê*-clauses before *mâ*-questions, see Judg. 16.10; 1 Sam. 9.7; 2 Sam. 24.17; 2 Kgs 4.13; 6.33; Jer. 8.9.

36. Van der Merwe, 'Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on *hinnê*', p. 127.

37. For the communicative levels, see Berge, *Reading Sources,* pp. 111-12.

38. Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus* (OTL; London: SCM, 1974), p. 66: 'Conceivably other possibilities are open than the actual giving of a name.'

39. Contra the view of Max Reisel, *The Mysterious Name of Y.H.W.H.* (SSN, 2; diss.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1957), pp. 9-10. He refers to passages in the Midrashic literature. The transliterations in Targum Onqelos and Peshitta express in all probability the same conviction. See, on the other hand, Gerhard F. Hasel, 'Linguistic Considerations regarding the Translation of Isaiah's *Shear-Jashub*: A Reassessment', *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 9 (1971), pp. 36-46, esp. 42. He contests, among other things, the view of L. Köhler (1954) that *Shear-Jashub* encompasses a 'bare relative clause' (as such it should be translated by 'the remnant *that* returns') by referring to Hebrew and other West-Semitic onomastics.

lowed by its explanation is improbable too. The answer could also consist of a reply to Moses' direct question in the form of an instruction on how Moses should deal with the question of the Israelites (i.e. a response on the performative level). This indeed applies to the answers given in vv. 14b and 15a, but not to the response concerned, that of v. 14a. In the last case it is improbable because of the nature of the response given: it is a statement about God in the first person. This response must therefore be of some other type.

At least at this moment it is not possible to say what kind of response the statement of Exod. 3.14a constitutes. However, when examining the relationship between answer and question we can at least observe that a part of the question, namely, Moses' self-introduction to the Israelites (therefore 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you') is a statement about God just like the divine statement of v. 14a. This provides a point of departure for a new investigation: Exod. 3.14a could be a response to just this self-introduction or may at least be related to it in some way. With a view to this issue, this self-introduction and its role will be considered in more detail.

In Moses self-introduction, 'the God of your fathers' is apparently a designation known to the supposed audience (cf. also sec. 4b). It constitutes therefore the (clause) topic, something about which something is said and which represents known, presupposed information. On the other hand, 'has sent me to you' forms the (clause) focus, that which is said about the topic and which expresses new information. There is no reason to assume that, in the situation given, the word order in Hebrew (subject-verb) is rather particular (one need not translate it, for instance, as 'It is the God of your fathers that has sent me').[40] What is important is that, according to Moses, it is this self-introduction that incites the Israelites to ask for the divine name as a matter of course.[41] The designation 'the God of your fathers' is

40. This touches on the question what is the basic, unmarked word order in Biblical Hebrew. It is mostly thought that this is verb-subject; thus, e.g., Sebastiaan J. Floor, *From Information Structure, Topic and Focus, to Theme in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2004) (found online), p. 9 (with references). He will probably analyze the sentence in question as an instance of sentence focus; see pp. 159-60. By contrast, Robert D. Holmstedt suggests a basic word order of subject-verb (esp. the frequency of wayyiqtol-forms in the Hebrew Bible causes a wrong impression). See Holmstedt, 'Word Order in the Book of Proverbs', in R.L. Troxel, K.G. Friebel and D.R. Magary (eds.), *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients* (Festschrift M.V. Fox; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 135-54. Perhaps this basic word order differs according to the nature of the text—narrative (with clause-initial *wa* + preformative conjugation prevailing) or discursive (with the preformative conjugation in different positions).

41. Childs, *Exodus,* p. 66: 'It is not posed as a hypothetical question (*'im*), but in a *hinnēh* clause. . . . The response of the people to Moses' proclamation is not regarded as a remote reaction, but as a natural one which he is sure to expect.'

obviously not enough for them.[42] But why, exactly? We might think that the name of God is simply unknown until then.

Within the book of Exodus, this is not an isolated issue. In 6.3 we read, 'I was seen by / I showed myself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as El Shadday, but I, [as for] my name Yhwh, was not known / did not reveal myself to them.' The syntax of the statement is quite complex,[43] but the sentence seems at first sight to argue that the name Yhwh was unknown until then. Nevertheless, the examples of the collocation 'to know (*yd'*) the name (*šēm*) of (X/Yhwh)' present another picture. If the name concerns (a) a human being, the knowledge in question apparently involves only the name as such, thus the name as a vocable. However, in relation to Yhwh-God, knowledge always means knowing who he is, on the basis of his acts. This applies to (b.1), the situation in which Israel is the knowing subject, but also (b.2), when the Gentiles have this function; but in the latter case presumably also the apprehension of the name itself is implied.[44] Because it is connected with Israel, it is therefore quite possible that the collocation in Exod. 6.3 refers first of all to the meaning of the name. Another argument for this conclusion is that it occurs in the prelude to the plagues narrative, in which 'knowing Yhwh' is a central theme, whereas this expression was lacking in Genesis.[45] Nevertheless, this does not preclude that the name itself is at stake in some way (e.g. its position among other divine designations), if only because we are at the beginning of the (hi)story of Israel. In the end, the interpretation of 6.3 depends on its place in the story line of Exodus.

This discussion about the divine name in ch. 6 should make us cautious in taking for granted that the request for a divine name in Exod. 3.13 is simply

42. Cf. Houtman, *Exodus,* I, p. 366. He points out that the designation of the sender is relatively vague (cf. Exod. 3.6) and that, consequently, it is bound to have calls for more information.

43. For this question readers are referred to the accurate analysis of W. Randall Garr, 'The Grammar and Interpretation of Exodus 6:3', *JBL* 111 (1992), pp. 385-408, esp. 387-97. Because of the covenantal context, Garr suggests finally as the meaning of Exod. 6.3b that God was not yet the object of full covenantal knowledge because he had not completely fulfilled his promises (p. 407).

44. (a) Prov 30.4; Ezra 5.10 (Aramaic); cf. Jer. 48.17; (b.1) Isa. 52.6; Ezek. 39.7; Pss. 9.11; 91.14; (b.2) 1 Kgs 8.43 = 2 Chron. 6.33; Isa. 64.1.

45. See Lyle Eslinger, 'Knowing Yahweh: Exod. 6:3 in the Context of Genesis 1–Exodus 15', in L.J. de Regt, J. de Waard and J.P. Fokkelman (eds.), *Literary Structures and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), pp. 188-98. Concerning this issue, Eslinger is very illuminating, although he conceives the expression in a too intellectual sense. Cf. Jürgen Kegler, 'Zu Komposition und Theologie der Plagenerzählungen', in E. Blum, Ch. Macholz and E. Stegemann (eds.), *Die hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte* (Festschrift R. Rendtorff; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), pp. 55-74, esp. 70-71.

due to ignorance of the name Yhwh. Perhaps a thorough investigation of the use of the different divine names in Genesis and Exodus will help us to clarify the background of the request for the divine name. It may also throw light on what kind of designations could be meant by the word *šēm*, 'name', within the context of this request; in other words, what extension it could have.

4. *The Divine Names in Exodus 1–3 and Genesis*

a. *The Names Yhwh and Elohim in Exodus 3*

In the preceding part of the call narrative, both Yhwh and *'elōhîm*, 'God', are used as divine names. Does the way these designations are employed clarify Moses' question and its answer? The two designations are often seen as indicating different sources, but this is not self-evident.[46] In any case, it is quite possible to read the narrative in a holistic and literary way and to take into consideration the difference in use between these designations.

Some exegetes differentiate the instances of *'elōhîm* further on the basis of the presence or absence of the article *ha*: *ha-'elōhîm* would indicate the perspective from below, from human protagonists; *'elōhîm,* from above, from God.[47] However, there is more reason to assume that the use of the article is syntactically conditioned.[48] For Exodus as a whole, in subject position *'elōhîm* is employed mostly without an article (but see 19.19; 20.21; 21.13). Its reference to the one God is usually secured by the personal form of the verb. In other positions, after an object marker or independent preposition or as second element in a construct phrase, it is preceded usually by an article.[49] Since in the other books of the Torah, the simple form *'elōhîm* prevails in a construct phrase,[50] presumably also individual or group-related variations of style play a part. The occurrence of *'elōhîm* with and without the article is closely connected with its word class, that is, with its use as title.

46. See Jacob, *Exodus*, pp. 51-52 (however, the translation is not entirely accurate: 'zu Mose spricht Elohim (v. 14, 15), aber Mose spricht zu ha-Elohim (v. 11, 13)' is rendered by '*E-lo-him* spoke to Moses in verses 14 and 15, *ha-e-lo-him* in verses 11 and 13', with the result that the issue of how *ha-'elōhîm*' is used gets lost; cf. the German edition, p. 46).

47. Thus Rolf Rendtorff, '*'El* als israelitische Gottesbezeichnung', *ZAW* 106 (1994), pp. 4-21, esp. 14-21 ('Appendix: Beobachtungen zum Gebrauch von *ha-'ĕlōhîm*'). Cf. Jacob, *Exodus*, pp. 52, 55 (German: pp. 46, 49).

48. After Aleida G. van Daalen (personal communication, *c.* 1994). See also Yoel Lerner, '*Ha-ṣûrôt "'ĕlōhîm" w^e-"ha-'ĕlōhîm" ba-tôrâ û-ba-n^ebî'îm ri'šônîm*' ('The forms '*ĕlōhîm* and *ha-'ĕlōhîm* in the Torah and the Former Prophets'), *Lĕšonénu* 48-49 (1985), pp. 195-98

49. Exceptions: 'the finger of god' in 8.15 and 31.18—does this concern a fixed phrase?

50. Lerner, '*'ĕlōhîm" w^e-"ha-'ĕlōhîm*', p. 196.

It is important to note that Yhwh is a real personal name, whereas *ʾelōhîm* is a titular name, in this case occurring as an independent divine designation.[51] As a personal name, Yhwh has in principle only an identificatory function, referring only to a specific person or entity. As a titular name *ʾelōhîm* not only refers to a specific someone but it also contains a sense given with its origin as a generic noun: it describes this someone in terms of a certain class, the class of gods (which is notably different from the class of human beings).[52] What agrees with the double nature of titles is that cross-linguistically they can occur with an article or not.[53] Since the word *ʾelōhîm* is linked or not with the article according to certain positions, this word is a particular case in this respect.

Within the call narrative, the use of the non-specific designation *ʾelōhîm* is suitable until the request for a specific divine name is brought up in vv. 13-15. The prologue to the call narrative starts even with an unusual concentration of this designation (2.23-25).[54] The word *ʾelōhîm* occurs five times in

51. The distinction has been inspired by a similar distinction by Erhard Blum, that between proper name and title. See Blum, 'Der vermeintliche Gottesname "Elohim,"' in I.U. Dalferth and P. Stoelger (eds.), *Gott nennen: Gottes Namen und Gott als Name* (RPT 35; cong.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 97-119, esp. 109. Because the difference does not concern a difference between two proper (i.e. personal) names, Blum concludes that the two divine designations cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish between different sources (p. 114). The distinction between Yhwh and *ʾelōhîm* as one between name and title was already made before by E.J. Revell, *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative* (CBET 14; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), sec. 15.1, p. 197 (but he can also call *ʾelōhîm* an 'epithet').

52. The formulation of the function of a title has been inferred from the discussion of more or less meaning-bearing names by John M. Anderson. See Anderson, *The Grammar of Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 88-109 ('Traditional Onomastics'). About titles he himself states: 'titles are descriptions, though they are usually only part of a name, not a name in themselves: to be addressed as *Sir* or *Mr.* involves the use of a *surrogate name*' (p. 108; last italics are mine). Elsewhere he states in relation to the sentence 'The President/King has left' that these 'titular forms . . . are also names' (p. 193). In the same way he deals with the use of 'God' as designation: 'The sentence *There is no other god than God* makes sense only if there is both a noun and a name with the same form' (p. 137). It appears therefore that Anderson treats titles as a particular type of names whereas Blum (see previous note) differentiates sharply between titles and names. It should, however, be noted that Anderson distinguishes clearly between (prototypical) personal names and names such as titles, and in that respect his distinction is not so very different from that of Blum.

53. See Blum, 'Der vermeintliche Gottesname "Elohim,"' pp. 106-10 (for German and Greek); pp. 110-13 (for Hebrew).

54. N.R.M. Poulsen compares it with the heavenly court scene, such as occurs in 1 Kgs 22.19-22; Job 1.6-12; 2.1-6; Tob. 3.16-17. See Poulsen, 'De roeping van Mozes (Ex 2.23-4.17): Zin en tegenzin', in W.M.E. Logister *et al.* (eds.), *Twintig jaar ontwikkelingen in de theologie: Tendensen en perspectieven* (Kampen: Kok, 1987), pp. 45-57,

subsequent clauses, in the last four as subject.[55] As a result of this repetition, its generic meaning becomes more prominent and therefore the divine status gets emphasized. In any case the redundant use as subject in connection with verbs expressing different kinds of observing serves to create tension: what will God do in reply to the cry of distress? In spite of the appropriateness of the designation *'elōhîm*, the name Yhwh does occur a few times in the text preceding the request for the name. First, the designation 'messenger (*mal'ak*) of Yhwh' is employed in a background description (v. 2), indicating to the reader that the burning bush concerns a manifestation of Yhwh but avoiding the idea that he is immediately recognizable as such to Moses (cf. Gen. 16.7; Judg. 6.12; 13.3). Second, the name Yhwh occurs in a striking transition of the two divine names in v. 4: 'Yhwh saw that he [Moses] turned aside to see and *'elōhîm* called to him out of the midst of the bush.' The use of the designation Yhwh probably indicates his personal involvement in what is going on. On the other hand, the designation *'elōhîm* is employed in connection with a term that suggests contact, that of 'calling'. It should also be added that the sharp transition between the two designations in v. 4, unprecedented in a prose text,[56] may be a signal to the reader that the difference between them is significant in this narrative. Third, this name appears in an introduction to speech together with 'said' but without 'to (him/Moses)'. This occurs in connection with the act to which it has been intimately linked afterwards: the exodus from Egypt (3.7-10).[57] From this survey it appears that the use of the name Yhwh does not play a part on the level of communication between Moses and God, but only on that between narrator and reader. It gives therefore the reader a certain advantage in knowledge over Moses until v. 15.[58]

esp. 47. Comparing the structure of the call narrative with that of a theatre peace, Nico Bouhuijs and Karel Deurloo speak of Exod. 2.23-25 as a 'prologue in heaven'. See Bouhuijs and Deurloo, *Een vreemdeling in ons midden: Dichter bij verhalen over de naam van God* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1980), p. 32.

55. For an analysis of the syntax of the last clause see below, Chapter 4, sec. 3a, last part.

56. See Frank Polak, 'Theophany and Mediator', in Marc Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction—Reception—Interpretation* (BETL 126; cong.; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1996), pp. 113-47, esp. 119-20 note. Polak notes the concurrence in poetry of both divine names in parallelism; e.g., in Pss. 47.6; 56.11; 58.7; 68.17; 69.14; 70.2, 6.

57. Berge arrived at the same conclusion; see *Reading Sources*, pp. 132-33. Cf. also Exod. 6.2-8; 18.1; 20.2; Ezek. 20.5-6; Hos. 12.10; 13.4.

58. See Aleida G. van Daalen, 'The Place Where YHWH Showed Himself to Moses: A Study of the Composition of Exodus 3', in Martin Kessler (ed. and trans.), *Voices from Amsterdam: A Modern Tradition of Reading Biblical Narrative* (SBLSS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), pp. 133-44, esp. 138, 139; Jonathan Magonet, 'The Names of

It is noteworthy that the transition from the designation *'elōhîm* to that of Yhwh is also connected elsewhere in Exodus with a change from a relative indefiniteness to a clarification of who God is and what he wants.[59] This pattern is also found in 6.2 (with the renewed revelation in Egypt; see sec. 3), 18.1-11 (Jethro getting knowledge of what happened to Israel) and 20.1-2 (at the beginning of the Ten Words).

We can conclude that the use of the divine names in the earlier verses of Exodus 3 prepares for the introduction of the name Yhwh in God's third answer. However, it does not make clear whether the divine name in that answer is supposed to be employed for the first time or is only reconfirmed. In any case, the preceding subtle use of the divine names and the mention of the divine name in the third answer argue against the interpretation of the first response as evasive.

b. *The 'God of the Fathers'*

Another avenue for clarifying Moses' question may be the study of the title 'God of the Fathers'.[60] In the call narrative the designation 'the God of your fathers' occurs by itself only in v. 13. The most similar title in the preceding verses is 'the God of your father' in v. 6. In relation to Moses, God uses the singular 'your father', whereas, with a view to fellow Israelites, Moses employs the plural. The designation is accompanied in v. 6 by the triple designation 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'.

God in Biblical Narratives', in J. Davies, G. Harvey and W. G. E. Watson (eds.), *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed* (Festschrift J. F.A. Sawyer; JSOTSup, 195; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995), pp. 80-96, esp. 83. It may be added that in fact even the strange transition from Reu*el* as name of Moses' father-in-law in 2.18 to that of Jethr*o* (with a possible third-person element) in 3.1 prepares the transition of *'elōhîm* to Yhwh in the dialogue. The associative links of the two names will be activated by the designation of Moses' father-in-law in both cases as 'the priest of Midian' (which will result as a matter of course in the question: 'priest in function of which god?'). See also the suggestive change between Jether and Jithro in 4.18. Cf. André Lacocque, *Le devenir de Dieu: Commentaire biblique* (EncUniv; Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1967), pp. 71-72.

59. Cf. Thomas L. Thompson, 'How Yahweh Became God: Exodus 3 and 6 and the Heart of the Pentateuch', *JSOT* 68 (1995), pp. 57-74, esp. 68-73. In the transition he sees his thesis illustrated that Yhwh was seen as a specific form of the general *'elōhîm*. This view seems to me a reversal of relationships. Nothing in the call narrative or elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible indicates what Thompson's view presupposes: an embarrassment with the divine name.

60. The investigation here is restricted to the function of the designation in the biblical text as it has come down to us. The text of Genesis is supposed to have been present to the composer of Exod. 3 and esp. the sequence of 3.13-15 to a significant extent. By contrast, most studies of this title from Albrecht Alt onward attempt to go behind the text to reconstruct the religion of the patriarchs. Cf. n. 109 below, and the literature referred to by the books of M. Köckert and K. van der Toorn mentioned there.

In 3.15, 4.5 and virtually also in 3.16, the title 'the God of your [4.5: their] fathers' is preceded by the name Yhwh and followed by the triple designation (in 3.16: 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob').

This triple designation (therefore with thrice 'the god of Y' in succession) occurs only in the narrative of the call of Moses and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. The designation is reminiscent, however, of similar designations in Genesis, which are simple (26.24; 46.1) or twofold in nature (28.13; 31.42; 32.10; cf. 31.53). Such a personal divine designation may be combined with the title 'god of my father' (31.42) or may be mixed with it in one way ('the god of Y, your father'; 26.24; 28.13) or another ('the god of my/his father, Y'; 32.10; 46.1). The title 'God of my (etc.) father' is also found by itself.[61]

Most comparable to the sequence of Exod. 3.6 is that of 'the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the Fearful [One] of Isaac' in Genesis 31.42. Also there 'father' is used in the singular. How should such sequences be explained? As also comparative evidence indicates,[62] the singular 'father' refers primarily to one's own, personal father, the patriarch of the family; but since the god of the father is in principle also the god of the father of this person, and the god of the latter's father and so on, the word 'father' in the formula may also include the ancestors.[63] As regards the sequence of Gen. 31.42, it is not only relevant that Isaac is the father of Jacob, according the Genesis narratives, but also that Abraham was considered to be the grandfather of Jacob and that therefore the latter will have known him as the patriarch of the family for a certain time.[64] Against this background, 'father' in 'the God of your father' refers first of all to Moses' biological father but additionally also to the ancestors, including Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the first devotees of this god. Note also that by this reference the events surrounding Moses' birth (2.1-10) and during his youth (2.11-15)

61. Gen. 31.5 ('my'), 29 ('your' pl.); 43.23 ('your' pl.); 46.3; 49.25; 50.17 ('your' sing.).

62. See Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (SHCANE 7; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), esp. p. 158. His conclusion '*'il'ib* [explained as "the god-of-the-father"] stands for the ancestors [note the plural] of the gods' is relevant in this connection because in Ugarit the human world is reflected in the divine world.

63. In this connection it is also important that the Hebrew word *'āb* concerns only the difference between the generation of the person in question and one or more previous generations. It does not distinguish between previous generations, as 'father' contrasts with, for instance, 'grandfather' in English. Cf. Helmer Ringgren, s.v. *'ābh*, *TDOT*, I, esp. pp. 7-8. It explains why in cases such as Gen. 31.42 and Exod. 3.6 the reference of the term can easily shift (by way of metonymy).

64. This is true according to the numbers of years mentioned in Genesis (see 21.5; 25.7), but not according to the narrative sequence (see 25.8, 21).

are finally put under the heading of divine guidance (cf. 15.2 and esp. 18.4). This title gives therefore retrospectively a new dimension to the first chapters of Exodus, in which at first sight God seems to be virtually absent (apart from 1.20)!

What is most important to us in connection with the question of Exod. 3.13 is that the singular title 'the God of your father' and the triple designation of 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' in Exod. 3.6 are reminiscent of the ancestral narratives of Genesis. Verse 3 of ch. 6, quoted above, points in the same direction. Against this background, it may be useful to inquire into the use of other divine names in these ancestral narratives.

c. *Divine Names and Genesis*

In Genesis the most common divine names are Yhwh and *'elōhîm*. According to ch. 4, people already started to call on the name Yhwh in the third generation of humankind (v. 26). Also in this case the occurrence of these two designations is traditionally explained from a source critical point of view. From a literary perspective we may note, nevertheless, that also here the transition in a narrative from *'elōhîm* to Yhwh may also be associated with the change from a certain indefiniteness to a manifestation of who God is and what he wants (see Gen. 22.1-18).[65] Other uses may be explained in another way or may escape our understanding.[66] For the discussion of the background of the request for a divine name in Exod. 3.13, the global distribution of the two divine names over the ancestral narratives is most interesting. In those of Abraham and Isaac the name Yhwh predominates,

65. For the 'sacrifice of Abraham', see, e.g., the illuminating exegesis of G.H. ter Schegget, *Het geheim van de mens* . . . (Baarn: Wereldvenster, 1972), pp. 9-30. The change in divine names in Gen. 22 is also seen by Eckart Otto as a matter of communicative levels (he distinguishes between 'Erzählzeit' and 'Erzählter Zeit'); for him it is, however, only an anticipatory reflection of the revelation of the name in Exod. 3 and 6). See Otto, 'Abraham zwischen JHWH und Elohim. Zur narrativen Logik des Wechsels der Gottesbezeichnungen in den Abrahamerzählungen', in A.C. Hagedorn and H. Pfeiffer (eds.), *Die Erzväter in der biblischen Tradition* (Festschrift M. Köckert; BZAW, 400; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 49-65.

66. See Donald J. Slager, 'The Use of Divine Names in Genesis', *The Bible Translator* 43 (1992), pp. 423-29; Anthony Abela, 'U. Cassuto's Alternative Explanation of the Divine Names Phenomenon within the Abraham Narrative in Genesis', in H. Pavlincová and D. Papoušek (eds.), *The Bible in Cultural Context* (cong.; Brno: Czech Society for the Study of Religions, 1994), pp. 11-23; and, quite recently, the monograph of Terrance R. Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for 'God' within the Pentateuch: A Cognitive-Semantic Investigation in Literary Context* (LHBOTS 495; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008), passim. Cf. (for Judges-Kings) Revell, *Designation of the Individual*, pp. 197-206 (= ch. 15), 214, 217.

while in the stories of Jacob and Joseph, that of *ʾelōhîm* clearly prevails.[67] This pattern continues in the first chapters of Exodus. As a consequence, the use of the name Yhwh may no longer be self-evident in the narrative of the call of Moses. The biblical reader is possibly sensitized to this issue by Jacob's unanswered request for a name in Gen. 32.30. After that, the name Yhwh occurs only once in direct speech, in a clearly detached exclamation about halfway through Jacob's blessing of his sons during the final hour of his life (49.18).[68]

In the ancestral narratives there are also many particular divine designations. *El Elyon* (*ʾēl ʿelyôn*, 'God Most High', Gen. 14.18, 19, 20, 22), *El Olam* (*ʾēl ʿôlām*, '[the] Everlasting God', 21.33) and *El Ro-i* (*ʾēl roʾî / rōʾî*, 16.13; see below) are found in the Abraham cycle. On the other hand, '[the] Frightful [One] of Isaac' (*paḥad yiṣḥāq*, Gen. 31.42, 53), '[the] Strong One of Jacob' (*ʾᵃbîr yaʿᵃqōb*) and '[the] Shepherd, [the] Stone of Israel' (*rōʿe ʾeben yiśrāʾēl*, 49.24) occur in relation to the patriarch Jacob. These designations can be called epithets,[69] terms describing a particular aspect of the person concerned but serving at the same time as a personal name. Within the framework of the book of Genesis these epithets always function as nonce words. The designation 'the god of Bethel' (*ha-ʾēl bêt-ēl*, 31.13) does not seem to belong to this group because it refers back,[70] as may also be obvious from the two following relative clauses. The designation *El Shadday* stands apart from these designations in a different way. First of all, it is somehow related to all the patriarchs and also to Joseph.[71] Within the designation *El Shadday* the word *ʾēl* is obviously a meaning-bearing element and has a classifying function.[72] However, the word *šaddāy*, traditionally rendered 'Almighty', was presumably not intelligible as such to native readers; and, since its sense is consequently not prominent, it has virtually the nature of a typical name. As already indicated when dealing with Exod. 6.3 (sec. 3, second last paragraph), this divine designation was associated with the ancestral age, as its use in the book of Job also suggests. Finally,

67. Sometimes *ʾēl* is used in a similar way as *ʾelōhîm*, either in nominal sentences (33.20; 46.3) or with qualifiers (35.1, 3; 49.25—'the *ʾēl* of your father').

68. Cf. Gen. 38 (3x) and 39 (5x at the beginning, and 3x at the end) for indirect speech.

69. In this sense, e.g., Frank M. Cross, s.v. *ʾēl*, *TDOT,* I, pp. 242-61, esp. 255-57. Cf. the subcategory of 'bynames' as described by Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 88.

70. Thus Rendtorff, '*ʾEl* als israelitische Gottesbezeichnung', pp. 6-7.

71. Gen. 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; 43.14; 48.3; 49.25 (in this verse without *El*).

72. Something not unusual in names, especially in place names (e.g. *Lake Victoria*). See Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, pp. 106-107. Because *ʾēl* is an optional element in El Shadday, it could also be considered a specifier or title. See Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 318.

the designation Yhwh clearly concerns a 'proper name' too.[73] However, although its priority is suggested in Genesis (even as early as 4.26), this is never stated, let alone substantiated.

The ancestral narratives also show another important feature. The divine name is not only at stake during the theophany to Jacob in ch. 32. A new divine name is sometimes brought forward, inspired by a divine intervention. For example, the 'messenger (*mal'ak*) of Yhwh' appears to Hagar, who has fled after being humiliated by her mistress, Sarah. He reveals to her that she will have many offspring and give birth to a son. Subsequently she 'calls out' the 'name of Yhwh': 'You [are] *El Ro-i,* the God [who is] seeing me', because, as she explains by a rhetorical question: 'Have I [not] also [*gam,* possibly meaning: like he in relation to me] seen him / [gone] seeing for him here [the One who is] seeing me?!' (16.13), the one who attests that he has taken notice of her. A special divine designation may also name places of God's intervention: *Yhwh Yir'e,* 'Yhwh will see (provide)' (22.14); *El-Elohey Yisrael*, 'El [is] the God of Israel' (33.20; apparently honouring the protection Jacob or Israel had just experienced); and, again, *El Bethel* (35.7, now without article).[74] These designations manifest the convertibility of divine names to names of holy places. Elsewhere in Genesis God presents himself as *El Shadday* at the start of a divine discourse (17.1). Although this designation is not explained, its significance is underlined in the chapter concerned by the particular, covenantal context of its appearance.

We may now ask ourselves how the request for a name in Exod. 3.13 may be interpreted against the background of the ancestral narratives. The very different nature of the divine names in Genesis should first call for clarification of what is meant by 'name' in the request. Generally speaking, the word *šēm*, 'name', has a wide range of different uses, even if only the sense

73. Anderson rejects the term 'proper name' because it traditionally implies its inclusion in the general category of 'names', i..e., nouns. See Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, esp. pp. 3-5. In my view, the use of the term can still have sense as far as it distinguishes a specific category of names from bynames and titular names. Note the distinction Anderson makes between a 'simple name' and a 'full name' (*Grammar of Names*, pp. 298-302). On p. 330 he speaks of '*properly personal names* combined with names derived from family names, and extended by titles of various sorts. These provide alternative personal names, appropriate to different settings' (italics mine).

74. See also the use of divine names for altars and places as marking divine involvement elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible: *Yhwh Nissi* ('Yhwh [is] my banner'), in Exod. 17.15; *Yhwh Shalom* ('Yhwh [of/is] peace'), in Judg. 6.24; *Baal Perazim* ('Lord of the breakthroughs'), in 2 Sam. 5.20 = 1 Chron. 14.11; *Yhwh Zidkenu* ('Yhwh [is] our justice'), in Jer. 33.16 (for Jerusalem; cf. for a messianic king in 23.6); *Yhwh Shammah* ('Yhwh [is] there'), in Ezek. 48.35 (cf. 39.29: 'I will never again hide my face from them'); cf. *El Berith* ('God of the Covenant'), in Judg. 9.46.

of a vocable (see sec. 3) is considered and not that of more metaphorical meanings of 'fame' and 'reputation' (see sec. 2 at Judges 13). It may mean a generic noun (see Gen. 2.19-20), and in this connection one could think of, for instance, the word *'elōhîm*. However, in the context of the request in Exod. 3.13 this is improbable because its immediate cause, the introduction 'the God of your fathers has sent me to you', implies that the name asked for is something more specific than the title 'God of your fathers'. The word *šēm* may also mean an epithet such as *El Ro-i*, as we have seen in Gen. 16.13 (cf. also Isa. 9.5). Therefore, the 'name' asked for does not need to be a strict personal name such as Yhwh, although such a name would be the most exact answer. The compound nature of God's self-designation in his third answer (3.15a), composed of Yhwh and other designations, confirms in fact these two suppositions.

The ancestral narratives of Genesis may also tell us something about the reason why in Exod. 3.13 a name is asked for. The multitude of divine names in these narratives indicates that the answer is not self-evident. It is in fact not completely obvious what is only a divine epithet, a byname, and what a proper name, at least not on the level of direct discourse.[75] The status of the name Yhwh is also not clear, all the more because of its virtual absence from the last part of Genesis. On the other hand, complete ignorance of any divine name is not the most likely context of the request in Exod. 3.13. Against the background of the ancestral narratives it would be more probable to ask for God's most proper name among the many divine names, or, alternatively, for a new divine name that could cover his present appearance to Moses.

These findings offer a good reason to pay serious attention to another aspect of divine naming in Exodus 3.

d. *The Names Ehyeh and Yhwh in Exodus 3*

The combination in Exod. 3.14b of the verb form *'ehye*—literally, 'I shall be' or 'I am'—with a verb form in the third person (*šelāḥ*, 'has sent') suggests that the former functions as a subject and is used as a proper name.[76] Therefore, the message to the Israelites in the second answer may be translated with 'Ehyeh has sent me to you.' The message in the third answer in v. 15a closely resembles it: 'Yhwh . . . has sent me to you.' The difference concerns only the divine name (in v. 15a combined with other divine designations). In both cases the answer is reminiscent of the immediate cause

75. And, of course, generally speaking a byname may develop into the main proper name. See Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 94 (note).

76. William R. Arnold, 'The Divine Name in Exodus iii.14', *JBL* 24 (1905), pp. 107-65, esp. 124; Reisel, *Mysterious Name*, pp. 9, 30.

of Moses' question, his self-introduction ('The God of your fathers has sent me to you') to the Israelites. Moreover, the preceding introduction to each of the answers ('Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel') is closely linked in wording with the direct question that Moses finally puts in v. 13 to God ('What shall I say to them?'). These two features make clear that both responses give an answer to just that question.

The problem is how the two answers are related. Their strict correspondence apart from the divine names suggests that a close connection is intended between these answers.[77] The nature of the relationship between them will in the first place be determined by the order of the two divine names and the character of the difference between these names. What matters in this connection is that the name Ehyeh is transparent in its meaning. Some texts in the Hebrew Bible suggest that a name may be given because of its descriptive meaning (e.g. Isa. 7.14; Hos. 1.4, 6, 9). In any case, a particular interest in the 'meaning' of a name is betrayed by many instances of 'folk etymology' elsewhere, in which the name is derived from a common word (many examples in Genesis, e.g., in 32.29). This interest is virtually universal,[78] but in the Hebrew Bible it is in all probability promoted by the transparency of many proper names. In this context it may be supposed that the new name Ehyeh serves to illuminate the meaning of the old name Yhwh. The likelihood of this supposition depends in large measure on the way the name Yhwh was pronounced.

This is a controversial issue. According to the majority view, the pronunciation of Yhwh was *Yah-weh* (in letters of the International Phonetic Alphabet: *ja:wæ*). Following Ehyeh, the name Yhwh may be heard simply as an (archaic) third-person form of the verb *hyh-hwh,* therefore, as 'he will be' / 'he is.' The primary evidence for this pronunciation is provided by certain Church Fathers. They give several descriptions of the pronunciation, and although these can be interpreted in different ways, at least the pronunciation *iabe* seems to point clearly in this direction.[79] Other arguments are sometimes adduced, such as the vowels of surrogate (*kinûy*) words used in Jewish blasphemy trials.[80] A major argument for the pronunciation Yahweh is its suitability in Exod. 3.14-15.[81] However, the question could also

77. Thierry, 'Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton', pp. 37-38.

78. Thus Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, pp. 83, 84-86, 92, 127.

79. See, e.g., Thierry, 'Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton', pp. 33-36; cf., however, Josef Tropper, 'Der Gottesnahme **Yahwa*', *VT* 61 (2001), pp. 81-106, esp. 94: he argues that the final letter epsilon may also represent an *a* or *ā* sound.

80. Arnold, 'Divine Name', pp. 142-53. He points to *ywsh* (but that would rather reflect *y[ᵉh]owe* or *y[ᵉh]uwa*!) and *'g'* (often connected with Ehyeh). He views Ehyeh in Exod. 3.14 as a more primitive form of a surrogate name (pp. 142, 162-63).

81. E.g., quite clearly, Thierry, 'Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton', pp. 36-40.

be posed whether the alleged pronunciation is not just an unintended side effect of this text! In any case, the majority view has been contested time and again. In this respect it is important that the best-attested pronunciation of the vowels of the divine name in the sources is *a-o*.[82] These vowels are suggested by the occurrence of *iaō* as a divine name in some Septuagint manuscripts, other evidence in the Church Fathers, *yhw* of the Elephantine papyri, and also the final element found in proper names such as *yir^{e}miyāhû* (Jeremiah). The problem of this evidence, however, is that it concerns only the first three letters of Yhwh. On the basis of various arguments, something like *Yāhû(w)â* has been reconstructed.[83] In relation to the interpretation of Exod. 3.14-15, the question is only relevant whether such pronunciations would make a derivative relationship between Ehyeh and Yhwh inconceivable.[84] For a 'native reader', someone familiar with etymological proceedings in contemporary literature, that would certainly not be the case. The simplest solution would be to connect Yhwh with a peculiar third-person preformative form of *hwh: y^{e}hû'* (attested in Eccl. 11.3).[85] Alternatively, the second syllable of the name may be related to the third-person pronoun, notably to the suffix *-o* or the independent pronoun *hû'*.[86] In this case Exod.

82. For the evidence, see David E. Aune, 'Iao', in E. Dassmann *et al.* (eds.), *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* XVII (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1996), cols. 1-12; George H. van Kooten, 'Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and his God Yahweh, Iao, and Sabaoth, Seen from a Graeco-Roman Perspective', in van Kooten (ed.), *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the Pagan Graeco-Roman World, and Early Christianity* (TBN, 8; orig. cong.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), pp. 107-38, esp. 126-32.

83. See Reisel, *Mysterious Name*, pp. 36-61, 74-75; George Wesley Buchanan, 'Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls', *Revue de Qumran* 13 (1988; Festschrift J. Carmignac), pp. 411-20, esp. 413-19 ('The Pronunciation of the Tetragram'). Tropper, '**Yahwa*', pp. 87-88, suggests that the a-ending is the marker of an archaic absolutive case. His reconstruction *Yahwa* is based on the (syllabic) rendering of the theophoric element *ia-a-wa*$_6$ in personal names in late Babylonian texts (Reisel uses the same material but also other sources).

84. Thus André Caquot, 'Les énigmes d'un hémistiche biblique', in Paul Vignaux *et al.*, *Dieu et l'Être: Exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de Coran 20,11-24* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978), pp. 17-26, esp. 24-25; cf. also D. Volgger, 'Wer bin Ich? Oder noch einmal zu Ex,14!', *LASBF* 49 (1999), pp. 9-36, esp. 27.

85. Reisel, *Mysterious Name*, p. 39 (note). This often-contested form can be understood as apocopate form; see A. Schoors, *The Preacher Sought to Find Pleasing Words: A Study of the Language of Qoheleth* (OLA 41; Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek and Peeters, 1992), pp. 42-43.

86. Cf. Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BZAW 3,10/46; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1928), p. 143: he mentions the names Abihu, Elihu and Jehu as compounded with the third-person pronoun.

3.14-15 would be an example of a 'partial derivation'.[87,88] The initial element *ya-* may then be considered to have been ignored (cf. the explanation of the name Yabez in 1 Chron. 4.9) or viewed as implicated here by the context as a vocative particle, 'O!', because of the subsequent solemn declaration of v. 15b.[89]

In both ways of pronouncing Yhwh, Ehyeh can be connected with the first-person verb form, Yhwh with some indication of the third person. The question remains, however, whether the name Ehyeh only serves to illuminate the meaning of the name Yhwh or has a function of its own.

Most exegetes see Ehyeh as an ad hoc variation on Yhwh without any further significance. Only the latter vocable would therefore be a real name, not the former. In this understanding, Ehyeh, 'I am', serves only to make a transition between 'I am who I am' of v. 14a and 'Yhwh' of v. 15a.[90] Several objections, however, can be raised against this view.

First of all it should be noted that Ehyeh does function as a name, no matter how provisional it might be. Second, it could be asked, if the use of the first person is insignificant, why it is not avoided altogether. Even in Exod. 3.14a the use of the first person is in principle not necessary, for God might have said, putting himself in the 'shoes' of Moses: 'He is who he is.' In any case, the use of *yihye*, 'he will be' / 'he is', in 3.14b would be more natural in the mouth of Moses.[91] Moreover, this would also suggest more directly that the name Yhwh in 3.15a is a third-person form of the verb *hyh-hwh*. It may be added that the etymology of other biblical names sometimes involves a certain alternation in person of the verb form (Gen. 38.29; Josh. 5.9), but never a switch in person of the name form itself.

What is more important is that as a name Ehyeh must have sounded rather strange. Although it is a name, its meaning remains transparent. In this connection it matters what biblical name etymologies tell us about what is normal for a name. There are several third-person verb forms serving

87. The term is borrowed from (but not used in exactly the same way as in) Yair Zakovitch, 'A Study of Precise and Partial Derivations in Biblical Etymology', *JSOT* 15 (1980), pp. 31-50.

88. A comparable allusion could then be Isa. 41.4b, with Yhwh and *hû'* occurring in parallelism. This is the first occurrence of the *'anî hû'*, 'I [am] He', phrase in (Deutero-) Isaiah (also in 43.10, 13; 48.12; and further in Deut. 32.39).

89. About this particle, see Josef Tropper, 'Die Vokativpartikel *yā*^{h} im Hebräischen', *ZAH* 15/16 (2002/2003), pp. 168-71.

90. Noth, *2. Mose*, p. 31; Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (HBI; New York: Behrman House, 1969), p. 83; Roland de Vaux, 'The Revelation of the Divine Name YHWH', in J.I. Durham and J.R. Porter (eds.), *Proclamation and Presence* (Festschrift G.H. Davies; London: SCM, 1970), pp. 48-75, esp. 65.

91. Caquot, 'Énigmes d'un hémistiche', p. 23 (referring to S. Mowinckel, 1929).

as proper names in Biblical Hebrew,[92] but a first-person verb form never functions as such elsewhere. Names are generally given by others and are therefore coined from their point of view. This is also clear from examples of folk etymology. On the one hand, they may say something about the situation of the name giver (e.g. Isa. 7.14); on the other, something about the person named (e.g. Gen. 32.29), but also in that case the name usually concerns a third-person form. Nevertheless, there are some proper names that are explained by means of first-person verb forms. In these cases too, however, the name is supposed to point to the view of the name giver, not to that of the person named. For example, the name 'Naphtali' is explained as '(A god-struggle) have I struggled (with my sister)' (Gen. 30.8), and is therefore apparently understood as 'my struggle'.[93] The point is that the text connects the 'I' to the adoptive mother, Rachel, and not to her adopted son (cf. also Gen. 29.34). As a first-person verb form, even formulated by the person named from his own perspective, Ehyeh is therefore a highly unusual name. This is underlined by the only other exception, which occurs in Ruth 1.20. When Naomi returns from Moab to Judah she proposes that her fellow citizens no longer call her Naomi (literally: 'my agreeableness') but Mara (= 'bitterness') 'because *Shadday* has dealt bitterly with me'. As in the case of Ehyeh and different from the general rule, the meaning of this name is obviously understood from the viewpoint of the person named, although in this case it lacks an indication of the first person. It should also be noted, however, that in Ruth 1.20 the naming by the person concerned herself happens in particular circumstances and only as a variation on (notably a reversal of) the existing name.

The strangeness of the name Ehyeh is also apparent from another point of view. When an etymology elsewhere depicts the person named, it always concerns a definite quality.[94] However, this cannot be the case with the name Ehyeh. Of course, this also applies in principle to Yhwh, but this is only brought out through Ehyeh. The result of all these features is that Ehyeh

92. Cf. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen*, p. 32 (for preformative verb forms as personal names, see pp. 27-28, with, among other things, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, Joseph as examples).

93. Cf. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen*, p. 33 (about the use of the first-person suffix in names).

94. See T.C. Vriezen, '*'Ehje 'ašer 'ehje*', in W. Baumgartner *et al.* (eds.), *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), pp. 498-512, esp. 510. He notes in connection with the name Yhwh: 'dieser Gottesname Jahwe (Er ist) ist etwas Qualitätsloses und darin etwas *sui generis* in der altorientalischen Welt. Die altorientalischen Gottesnamen, sei es, dass sie konkrete Naturmächte oder -objekte, sei es, dass sie geistliche Eigenschaften bedeuten, sei es, dass sie in einer Verbalform eine bestimmte Funktion ausdrücken oder darauf anspielen, repräsentieren doch immer ein ganz bestimmtes Element in Natur- oder Geisteswelt (selbst wenn sie Baal oder El heissen).'

calls attention to itself to a degree that seems contrary to its supposed transitional function.

A final argument may be the next one. Biblical name etymologies are evidence of the sensitivity for names in general in biblical times. Given the profoundly religious atmosphere of those days, this sensitivity was in all probability even greater in relation to divine names. In this light it seems inconceivable that the use of a particular name form—Ehyeh—would not have any significance on its own. By contrast, the consideration of Ehyeh as a merely transitional form supposes a technical approach that is likely only after the development of grammar.[95]

95. This latter idea is, of course, suitable for investigation. Let me carry out a first exploration. According to my impression, in the Middle Ages rabbinical commentators started to discuss the grammatical relationship between the names Ehyeh and Yhwh for the first time in the history of exegesis. In his Torah commentary Rashi says nothing about it. He sees, rather traditionally (see *Ber.* 9b; and also Chapter 4, sec. 6, point 3c), *'ehye* in v. 14a and b only as an indication of God's being with the people in their misery. See, e.g., *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos and Rashi's Commentary: Exodus* (trans. and annot. by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann; Jerusalem: Silbermann, 1930), p. 12. Judah Halevi expresses himself differently: 'As for Ehyeh, it seems that it is [something] of [*min,* lit. from] [understand a(nother) form of / a variant on] this name [i.e. *Yhwh*] and it [also] seems that it is (a) derived [item / form] of (*min*) *hyh.*' Cf. (for a less literal translation) Juda Hallévi, *Le* Kuzari: *Apologie de la religion méprisée* (ed. and trans. C. Touati; repr., Leuven: Peeters, 2006), IV, 3, p. 150 (however, like others Touati translates the sentence as a matter of alternative, in spite of the asymmetry of the two main parts of the sentence and the use of the conjunction *wa-,* 'and', between them). Halevi's reserve may indicate that he refers to the views of other persons but also that these views are rather new. Halevi states subsequently that Ehyeh refers to the inaccessibility of God's essence to knowledge. A little later he also expresses that it points to God's being with those who seek him (see n. 157 below). Rashbam explains (originally in code, *atbash*): 'He calls himself *ehye(h),* while we call him *yihye(h).* [As for the name] *Y-h-w-h,* a *wav* [appears] instead of a *yod.*' See Rashbam (Samuel ben Meir), *Rashbam's Commentary on Exodus* (trans. M.I. Lockshin; BJS, 310; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 37-38 (note). At v. 15 Ibn Ezra says, translated as literal as possible: 'Another name [Yhwh], it [is] from [the same] meaning as the first [Ehyeh], except that the one [name] [relates] to the speech of the speaker [i.e. the first person], whereas this [name concerns] the particular speech of that which is not speaking itself [i.e. the third person] and both are from [the same] form group [as] *Yah.* These three names are proper names.' Cf. (for a less literal translation) *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Exodus (Shemot)* (trans. and annot. H.N. Strickman and A.M. Silver; New York: Menorah, 1996), p. 64. In the context of his exegesis in which divine names signify divine attributes, Nachmanides states more generally, literally translated: 'Ehyeh that he [God] commanded him to say to them, it [is equal to] this great name [Yhwh] and they are alike in their language form and in letters, for the two last letters [of the one name; Ehyeh] constitute the first [of the other name; Yhwh].' Cf. Ramban (Nachmanides), *Commentary on the Torah: Exodus* (trans. C.B. Chavel; New York: Shilo, 1973), p. 39. The grammaticalization of the relationship between the names Ehyeh and Yhwh is therefore most clearly witnessed

The question remains why the new name Ehyeh is added to the existing one of Yhwh; how does the former distinguish itself from the latter? It is

by Rashbam and Ibn Ezra (both writing in the twelfth century). In this connection it is significant that Hebrew grammar developed in those centuries. In all probability Saadya Gaon (tenth century) wrote the first grammar of Hebrew, in which he described, among other things, the conjugation of verbs. This grammatical knowledge was subsequently expanded by Jewish grammarians in Spain. See W. Bacher, s.v. 'Grammar, Hebrew', in I. Singer *et al.* (eds.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* VI (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1925; 1st impr. 1904), pp. 67-80; Aharon Maman, 'The Linguistic School: Judah Ḥayyūj, Jonah ibn Janāḥ, Moses ibn Chiquitilla and Judah ibn Balʿam', in M. Saebø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation,* I/2 The Middle Ages (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 261-81.

Before this period other approaches of the occurrence of the designation Ehyeh in v. 14b existed. Here only a survey can be given of the renderings of this designation together with those of the statement of v. 14a in the Targums. In one case (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan) all three *'ehye*'s are freely rendered; in another case (Targum Neofiti 1) the statement of v. 14a is transliterated, but the designation in v. 14b is explained by a free rendering. In these cases the designation *'ehye* is apparently seen as some message (see also Rashi above and Chapter 4, sec. 6, point 3c). However, there is another possibility, that of transliteration. In some cases (Targum Onqelos, Samaritan Targum; see also the Peshitta) the statement as well as the designation is transliterated. In ms. Vatican Ebr. 440 the whole message of v. 14b is transliterated and an explanation of v. 14a is interposed between the transliterations of vv. 14a and b. The secondary ms. Sassoon 264 is similar but only *'ehye* in v. 14b is transliterated there (and also the transliteration of v. 14a is missing): it sees apparently such a whole transliteration of the message of 14b as a mistake, possibly correctly (an influence of the Hebrew text). Anyhow, in some other cases the statement of v. 14a is translated but the designation of v. 14b transliterated (two glosses in Targum Neofiti 1). In all such cases 'ehye in v. 14b is apparently seen as a name, whether or not in combination with the statement of v. 14a (cf. ms. Paris Hébr. 110, in which the designation of v. 14b is substituted by *hw',* 'he', an alternative divine name). See for most of the material Alexandro Díez Macho (ed.), *Targum palaestinense in Pentateuchum,* II. *Exodus* (Biblia polyglotta Matritensia, series IV; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1980), pp. 14-15; for the relationship between the manuscripts mentioned, which represent different fragment-targums, see Michael L. Klein, 'The Extant Sources of the Fragmentary Targum to the Pentateuch', *HUCA* 46 (1975), pp. 115-35. The peculiar treatment of *'ehye* is also witnessed by Theodoret, who refers to *Aia* (Ehyeh) as pronunciation for the Tetragrammaton but also as an ineffable divine name. See Arnold, 'Divine Name', pp. 154-56; J. Brinktrine, 'Der Gottesname *'Aiá* bei Theodoret von Cyrus', *Bib* 30 (1949), pp. 520-23.

The grammaticalization of the relationship between the names Ehyeh and Yhwh should be considered a precondition for a technical conception of the name form Ehyeh, but it is not a sufficient condition for it. In fact, in the survey above we do not see a purely technical conception of Ehyeh yet (see also n. 98 below). It should be noted further that although the grammaticalization of the relationship between Ehyeh and Yhwh got shape in the High Middle Ages, this does not mean that there could not be any suspicion of it before that time. In this light we may consider the Talmudic divine designation *'ănâ wehû'* to be derived from Exod 3.14-15. Thus Thierry, 'Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton', pp. 40-41; see also Reisel, *Mysterious Name,* pp. 72-73.

noteworthy that Ehyeh as a name can only be used by God himself, but he cannot be addressed in this form.[96] This could reflect the conception that the giving of a name to someone manifests power over this person (cf. sec. 2, but also sec. 5, option II). It would then be self-evident that in God's case the name should proceed from God himself.[97]

This explanation of the name Ehyeh shares the common view that in this verse God speaks of himself as Ehyeh, but that others should speak of him as Yhwh. However, such a view ignores a peculiarity of the text. In the answer to be given to the Israelites, 'Ehyeh has sent me to you', God does not employ this name form to refer to himself, but, most surprisingly, he instructs Moses to do so. Thus, it is not only God but also Moses who may pronounce the name 'Ehyeh'. This situation contrasts with that of the third answer. According to this answer the Israelites should just use the name Yhwh (v. 15b): 'this [is] my name forever and this [is] my memorability-title (*zēker*) from generation to generation.' In particular the word *zēker* makes clear that Yhwh is the name to be employed.[98] The word refers to the act of remembering or mentioning or, as in the part of the verse concerned, to what is remembered or mentioned about somebody or something (the internal object); moreover, in relation to Yhwh, this word has a strong liturgical connotation in both senses.[99]

96. Thus Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 149.

97. Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1986), p. 52.

98. Rashbam suggests that the first *ze,* 'this', refers to Ehyeh (therefore Ehyeh is the name); the second, to Yhwh (then Yhwh is the title). See Rashbam, *Commentary on Exodus,* p. 37 (note). He is followed in this by Reisel, *Mysterious Name,* pp. 5-6. In a note (28, p. 90) he refers to Ps. 75.8; Isa. 44.5 and Job 1.16. The repetition *ze . . . wᵉze* means indeed usually 'this . . , that . . . / the one . . ., the other . . .' (i.e. successive *ze*'s as pointing to different persons or things). See *HALOT,* I, s.v. *ze,* sec. 7 (with also other examples). This possibility deserves attention. If it applies to Exod. 3.15b, it would strongly support the difference between Ehyeh and Yhwh advocated in the main text. In that case the parallelism of v. 14b and v. 15a would be reflected in the parallelism in v. 15b. In Gen. 29.27 and 1 Kgs 3.23 we also find that the two *ze*'s have not only a distributive function but are also referring back. However, successive *ze*'s may also point to one and the same person or thing. See Gen. 28.17 and esp. Cant. 5.16 ('this [is] my beloved, this [is] my friend'). As in these examples, in Exod. 3.15b we have to do with two parallel nominal clauses. What is more, the answer of v. 15a gets more emphasis than that of v. 14b by a more extensive introduction to speech ('God said further to Moses' instead of 'And he said') and a fourfold addition to the name Yhwh (see also the continuation of the main text)..

99. See Pss. 6.6; 30.5; 97.12; 111.4; 135.13; 145.7. On the root *zkr,* see, e.g., J. Blau, 'Reste de I-Imperfekts von *ZKR*, Qal. Eine lexikographische Studie', *VT* 11 (1961), pp. 81-86.

What is important is that the difference in use between Ehyeh and Yhwh is in accordance with certain features of the language of the Hebrew Bible. Generally speaking, in this there exists a nearly unbridgeable gap between revelatory words of God, on the one hand, and speaking about and to God, on the other. Speaking revelatory words is the main task of prophets, and in representing God they most often speak in the first person.[100] In other circumstances, such as worship, people speak to and about God as 'you' and 'he'.

Against the background of this distinction in language, the use of two different divine name forms—Ehyeh and Yhwh—may be understood as follows: it is of primary importance how God names himself; how people, the Israelites, refer to him is secondary. Considered in this way, the name Ehyeh may be understood as a real name and even as God's true name (a). It has a revelatory function and provides, as it were, a glance into heaven (b).[101] In following the name Ehyeh, the name Yhwh is, in a certain sense, only a derivative. Yhwh is the name that people use and also should use (3.15b), but it is presented as the mere human counterpart of the real divine name, Ehyeh.

Nevertheless, the name Ehyeh largely owes its power to its relationship with the old divine name, Yhwh. Moreover, even if this latter name can be said to be secondary and derivative, this does not mean that it is nonessential or insignificant. When the priority of Ehyeh has been established, then the name Yhwh can be given unrestricted use, bursting out in all its glory. In fact, v. 3.15b (quoted above) affirms the proclamation of the name in a hymnic way (cf. Pss 102.13; 135.13).[102] This half-verse also contradicts

100. See Ann M. Vater, *The Communication of Messages and Oracles as a Narration Medium in the Old Testament* (diss., Yale University, 1976 [Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1981]), pp. 11, (27), 30, 35, 164; also Vater, 'Narrative Patterns for the Story of Commissioned Communication in the Old Testament', *JBL* 99 (1980), pp. 365-82, esp. 372. Vater builds on an article of Rolf Rendtorff, 'Botenformel und Botenspruch', *ZAW* 74 (1962), pp. 165-77, esp. 176.

101. (a) See Edmond Jacob, 'Osée', in Jacob, C.-A. Keller and S. Amsler, *Osée, Joël, Abdias, Jonas, Amos* (CAT ; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1965), p. 22. (b) Cf. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), p. 199: 'This [Exod. 3.14] assumes that the people will recognize and acknowledge this name [Ehyeh], perhaps a secret name, as opposed to the public name Yahweh.' About the supposition of Andersen/Freedman, E. Jacob and others that Ehyeh as a name finds an echo in Hos. 1.9 and other passages, see Chapter 3. Already Rashbam stated the priority of the name Ehyeh over that of Yhwh. See n. 95 above. Cf. Berge, *Reading Sources*, p. 123.

102. In this respect the difference between the prepositions in the preceding message commissions of vv. 14b and 15a, *l*^{e} and *'el* respectively, is noteworthy. See Ernst Jenni, 'Einleitung formeller und familiärer Rede im Alten Testament durch *'mr 'el-* und *'mr l-'* (orig. 1999), in Jenni, *Studien zur Sprachwelt des Alten Testaments,* II (Stuttgart:

the supposition underlying the request for a name in v. 13 that the divine name may change depending on a new appearance (it is *l*^{e} *'ōlām*, 'forever'). Moreover, in 3.15a the name Yhwh holds the first place in a five-part name: 'Yhwh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. Such a 'great name' has royal, majestic connotations, as Egyptian usage and that of the Hebrew Bible show.[103,104]

5. *The Pragmatic Intent of the Request for a Name*

After this investigation of the use of divine names in Genesis and the beginning of Exodus, there is all the more reason to investigate the question 'what [exactly] is *the pragmatic function* of the request about the name' in Exod. 3.13.[105] Why do the Israelites ask for the divine name and why does Moses not know the answer? This is not explained and can only be conjectured. Several options have been mentioned.

a. Typology and Evaluation of Existing Interpretations

Sometimes it is supposed that the Israelites need the divine name (I) to call on God and to worship him.[106] This is not the only but indeed a crucial

Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 48-64; also Jenni, *Die hebräische Präpositionen,* III. *Die Präposition Lamed* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), secs. 60 and 613 (end) (in the chapter titled 'Lamed illocutionis'). Jenni indicates that in introductions to speech the difference between the directional *'el,* 'to(wards)' (suggesting distance), and generally relational *l*^{e}*,* 'in relation to' (suggesting a close connection), often gets shape in the following speech in a difference between a formal address and a familiar talk, also used for subordinate persons (see, e.g., 1 Sam. 28.3-25). In line with this the difference between the prepositions in the message commissions in vv. 14b and 15a indicates presumably a difference between an informative statement and an official proclamation.

103. Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott*, p. 143 (with further references). It is not only 2 Sam. 23.1 and Isa. 9.5 (here the first, the proper name is missing, as in Exod. 3.6) that have to be mentioned, but also Gen. 49.24-25, with, in the middle of the blessing of Joseph, four or five divine designations. This depends on whether or not 'the Shepherd' and 'the Stone of Israel' are counted as one title. It may be noted that Raymond de Hoop translates 'by the name of the Shepherd of Israel's stone' and takes 'stone' to mean 'stele'. See de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context* (OTS 39; diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 180, 198-205.

104. About the divine designations effectively used in Exod. 3.15a, see also Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, p. 43 at 3.6: it serves 'to establish an unbroken historic continuity between the present experience of Moses and the revelation received by his forefathers the Patriarchs, beginning with Abraham'.

105. Berge, *Reading Sources,* p. 115.

106. H. Holzinger, *Exodus* (KHC; Tübingen: Mohr, 1900), p. 11; S.R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (CBSC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 23; Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, p. 81; see also Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities,* 2.275.

aspect of the referential function of the divine name. In favour of this understanding it may be argued that in Judges 13 the reason for asking the name of the messenger is explained as giving the possibility of paying honour later (v. 17). It is also important that the verse preceding Exod. 3.13, v. 12, just spoke about serving God on the mount. Moreover, the answer of God in Exod. 3.15 indicates that this motive plays some role in the text because the word *zēker*, 'memorability-title', has a strong liturgical connotation, as we saw in the previous section (see sec. 4d, last part).

There are therefore many reasons favouring this interpretation. However, the situation of departure behind the need for a divine name is not immediately obvious. It is natural to suppose that the background of this need is (A) ignorance of the divine name, both by Moses and the Israelites. Moreover, if Moses cannot tell this name, his credibility would be seriously undermined (cf. option III below). The ignorance in question could be attributed to (A.1) a loss of the knowledge of the divine name in the past.[107] Such an interpretation may refer to the limited presence of the name Yhwh in the last part of Genesis and its complete absence in the first chapters of Exodus. Moreover, Exod. 2.23 seems to point to a certain estrangement of the Israelites in relation to God: they cried out and their cry for help went up to God, but they did not seem to pray to him. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible it is even stated that the Israelites served other gods in Egypt (Josh. 24.14; Ezek. 20.7-8; cf. 23.3-4). It should nevertheless be noted that within the call narrative itself the evidence for this conception is rather scanty.

Far more common is the idea (A.2) that according to the narrator the 'God of the Fathers' originally did not have a proper name. This is supported by texts in Genesis that do not use the name Yhwh but that of *ʾelōhîm*.[108] Against this view it is sometimes adduced that even in the 'Elohistic' parts of

107. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), p. 37 (also 16, 32). In his commentary on Exodus to Deuteronomy John Calvin already connected the question with a preceding decline in faith.

108. This is part of the so-called documentary hypothesis of J. Wellhausen *et al.*, which distinguishes among other things an Elohistic source. For the application of this hypothesis to Exod. 3.13, see, e.g., Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, p. 131. This source-critical view is often combined with a religion-historical view. According to Albrecht Alt, the title 'God of the Father' did not presuppose a proper name. See Alt, 'The God of the Fathers' (orig. 1929), in Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (trans. R.A. Wilson; Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp. 1-77, esp. 31. An old hypothesis stated already much earlier that the name Yhwh was unknown in the ancestral age but added in Genesis by Moses. According to Ibn Ezra, already the Karaite R. Joshua had this view. In the view of Moberly, the use of the name Yhwh in Genesis is the result of a retelling of the narrative material by the storytellers from their Yahwistic perspective. See Moberly, *Old Testament*, pp. 36-38, 70-78.

Genesis (with *'elōhîm* as the primary divine designation) God has particular names (cf. sec. 4c).[109] From the call narrative itself it has been argued that the sequence 'Yhwh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaak and the God of Jacob'' in v. 15 indicates that Yhwh was already the God of the ancestors.[110] However, the additions to the name Yhwh, 'the God of your fathers' and so on, can be considered clarifying notes to a newly introduced name (to be more exact: they would then concern 'close appositions' with a 'descriptionally identifying' function, see later at n. 192). What is more pertinent in this connection is that it is not clear from the narrative why the people should ask for this name just at this moment, while before, apparently, their ignorance of it was not a real problem.[111]

The background of the question may also be a relative ignorance regarding the divine name (B). The existence of many divine names, as evidenced by the ancestral narratives (see sec. 4c), may suggest that the request for a name in Exod. 3.13 should be interpreted as: 'What is God's most proper name?' (B.1).[112] However, the question remains also here whether this issue is pressing enough to be raised at this moment.

The request for a name is often connected with another function: (II) a magic interest in the divine name (and the divine statement in v. 14a may then be seen as a defence against it or else as an attempt to overcome this

109. Propp, *Exodus*, p. 204; cf. Paul Heinisch, *Das Buch Exodus* (HSchAT; Bonn: Hanstein, 1934), p. 51. Comparative evidence also shows that the 'God of the Father' is very often not anonymous. See the material mentioned by Matthias Köckert, *Vätergott und Väterverheissungen* (FRLANT, 142; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), pp. 110-13; and in particular that collected by van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, pp. 58, 72-75, 77-78, (80), 81, 136-37, 154-60, 175-76. According to van der Toorn (following in that respect O. Eissfeldt), the divine proper name is El within the framework of the Elohistic narratives (p. 261), but the Yahwist made it into a generic name by adding the definite article in some cases (Gen. 31.13; 46.3; p. 258). Cf., however, Rendtorff, '*'El* als israelitische Gottesbezeichnung', pp. 4-14.

110. Thus Cassuto, *Exodus*, p. 40. By contrast, it is very often supposed in source criticism and esp. by supporters of the documentary hypothesis that v. 15 has first of all as function to identify Yhwh and the god of the ancestors with each other. See, e.g., Beer, *Exodus*, p. 29; Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, p. 179.

111. Cf. Hugo Gressmann, *Die Anfänge Israels: Von 2. Mose bis Richter und Ruth* (SAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), p. 32: 'wenn die Gottheit selbstverständlich einen Namen haben muss, so muss sie selbstverständlich auch schon vorher einen solchen geführt haben.' He explains this inconsequence from a need to identify the god of the mountain with that of the fathers, overlooking therefore the possibility that the inconsequence in question is only the result of his own particular point of view.

112. See Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, p. 80; cf. Heinisch, *Exodus*, pp. 51-52 (he hears the question against an Egyptian background).

tendency).[113] The interest of the Israelites would have been influenced by the Egyptian environment in which they live (although magic is not an exclusively Egyptian affair).[114] Or the request would actually reflect the interest of Moses himself (cf. sec. 3), because he received an Egyptian education.[115] As leader of Israel he would need the name to exercise magical spells to overcome the power of Egypt. The descriptions of Moses' acts to bring about the plagues may indeed suggest links with Egyptian texts about magic.[116] The magic interest in the divine name could be related to a general ignorance of the divine name (background A).[117] However, the request for a name is often thought to have a specific Egyptian basis. According to an Egyptian text, the supreme god Re has many names, but the goddess Isis needed his essential but secret name to cure him from the poison of a snake.[118] In this context the background of the question in Exod. 3.13 would not only be the existence of many divine names but also the belief that there exists a secret one beyond them (B.2). In God's answer, only Ehyeh could be seen as a secret name, for the divine name Yhwh is considered to be public and not secret throughout the Hebrew Bible.[119]

The use of the divine name for magic was not unknown in the biblical world because in some biblical texts such a use is prohibited.[120] However, there is in fact not even the slightest indication of such an interest in or opposition to it in the present text nor in other narratives in the Hebrew

113. H.W. Obbink, *De magische beteekenis van den naam inzonderheid in het oude Egypte* (diss.; Amsterdam: Paris, 1925), pp. 116, and 4-7; Elias Auerbach, *Moses* (Amsterdam: Ruys, 1953), pp. 40-43; Ladislaus M. v. Pákozdy, '*'ehye 'ăšer 'ehye*—Die Deutung des *Jhwh*-Namens in Exodus 3:14: Ein Votum für die Übersetzung "Ich werde sein, der ich sein werde,"' *Judaica* 11 (1955), pp. 193-208, esp. 202-4. Already earlier Eduard Meyer understood the answer in v. 14a to turn against a magic conception of the divine name. See Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1911), p. 6.

114. Martin Buber, *Kingship of God* (orig. 1932; trans. R. Scheimann; London: Allen & Unwin, 1967), p. 105.

115. Pákozdy, 'Die Deutung des *Jhwh*-Namens', p. 202 (note).

116. Cf. Scott B. Noegel, 'Moses and Magic: Notes on the Book of Exodus', *JANES* 24 (1996), pp. 45-59.

117. James Plastaras, *The God of Exodus: The Theology of the Exodus Narratives* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1966), p. 99 (also referring to Judg. 13.17).

118. James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 3rd edn, 1969), pp. 12-14.

119. Cf. n. 101 above.

120. See Rüdiger Schmitt, *Magie im Alten Testament* (AOAT 313; orig. Habil.; Münster: Ugarit, 2004), pp. 283-87 (at Ezek. 13.17-21), 351-55 (at Lev. 24.10-16, 23, in connection with someone with partially Egyptian roots) and also 118-19 (at Exod. 20.7 = Deut. 5.11: not primarily anti-magic).

Bible in which God reveals himself.[121] And although the plagues narrative may suggest links with magical spells, the divine name itself is certainly not employed there in a magic way.

It is often suggested that the question of the Israelites intends (III) to test Moses. Such a testing is sometimes connected with an ignorance of the divine name by both Moses and the Israelites (A). However, it is more natural to see as its background (C) that the Israelites knew the divine name but Moses did not because he was brought up by Egyptians. The relative absence of the name Yhwh in connection with Moses attested initially in the call narrative could support this view. In this case knowledge of the name would serve as evidence to the Israelites that the God of the ancestors has really revealed himself to Moses.[122] Seen in this way, the question is a test of his trustworthiness. However, the nature of the self-representation of God to Moses in 3.6 and its similarity with those formulations spoken to the patriarchs in Genesis (see sec. 4b) suggest that God reveals himself here in a way known to Moses.[123] What is more, the resumption of the self-presentation of 3.6 by Moses in 3.13 as the 'God of your fathers' suggests that he had some knowledge of ancestral traditions.[124] The most important thing is that there are in fact no other indications suggesting a difference in knowledge between the Israelites and Moses; even the relative non-use of the Yhwh name initially in the call narrative does not support only this option.

Very common is the view that the request for a name asks for legitimization (IV).[125] This view finds support within the framework of Moses' question itself because the immediate cause of the request is his declaration that he has been sent by the God of the ancestors. Legitimization would mean a substantiation of this claim. This view should therefore be distinguished from the previous view. The question remains, however, how a divine name, be it a new name or an old one, could ever convince the Israelites of

121. Cf. Volgger, 'Wer bin ich?', p. 9: 'Zunächst lässt sich das gesamte A[lten] T[estament] daran keinen Zweifel, dass die Nennung des G[ottes]N[amens] YHWH, wie oft auch immer ausgesprochen, nichts mit dessen Verfügbarkeit zugunsten menschlicher Ansinnen zu tun hat.'

122. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 51; Christopher Seitz, 'The Call of Moses and the "Revelation" of the Divine Name: Source-Critical Logic and its Legacy', in Seitz, *Words without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 229-47, esp. 236-37.

123. Similarly Berge, *Reading Sources*, p. 114.

124. See van Daalen, 'Place Where YHWH Showed Himself', p. 140; Berge, *Reading Sources*, p. 114.

125. E.g. Noth, *2. Mose*, p. 29; Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, p. 168; Childs, *Exodus*, pp. 61, 67; Houtman, *Exodus,* I, p. 366 ('a question to Moses to show his credentials', the Dutch [*om zich te legitimeren*] could be more literally translated as 'to prove his legitimacy').

the claim.[126] Is it sufficient in these circumstances to state that knowledge of the name implies a special relationship with God?[127] The problem is not dealt with in a satisfactory way. Perhaps the commentaries are too focused on the answer in Exod. 3.14a to give the preceding question in v. 13 the attention it deserves.[128]

Another view is (V) that the request for a name serves only as a 'feeder', enabling God to make his point.[129] The author wanted simply to relate that the divine name was given through Moses to Israel simultaneously with his commissioning. Although he evidently supposed that the divine name was unknown up to then (background A), he did not think about the difficulties that the request might involve. He depicted the situation merely from his perspective, when that name was already an established practice.[130] Seen in this way, the request seems only to have a pragmatic function on the level of narrator and reader but not within the story itself. Regarding the former level, one might say more specifically that the name Yhwh provides legitimacy in the eyes of the—later—readers.[131] In this way this understanding can avoid the problem that the previous view raises. Nevertheless, the question may be put whether this is not a stopgap solution: in general it may be expected that a question and its answer have a function within the story itself and that the reader is involved through these story elements.

Authors who support the two last, most current types of interpretations of the request for a name isolate the request too much from its context. They read vv. 3.13-15 as a digression, as a distinct unit apart from the rest of the story.[132] However, the proclamation of the specific divine name cannot but

126. Already in this sense Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, I.63.

127. Houtman, *Exodus,* I, p. 366 (referring to Isa. 45.3-4; Gen. 32.30; Judg. 13.17-18).

128. By contrast, Berge puts in the forefront the question of how the revelation of a name could function as a legitimating device. See *Reading Sources*, pp. 119-25. The present section will later make use of his discussion. Berge himself ends with what in my view can only be a solution of last resort. See option V.

129. Jonathan Magonet, 'The Bush that Never Burnt (Narrative Techniques in Exodus 3 and 6)', *Heythrop Journal* 16 (1975), pp. 304-11, esp. 308 (speaking about the question as a 'narrative peg'); Jilles de Klerk, *'Ach Heer, zend toch een ander . . .': Een literaire analyse van de tegenwerpingen binnen de roepingsverhalen van Mozes, Gideon en Jeremia* (undergraduate thesis under the guidance of K.A.D. Smelik) (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1988), p. 37 (the term 'feeder' [*aangever*] has been borrowed from this thesis).

130. Moberly, *Old Testament*, pp. 63-64.

131. See Berge, *Reading Sources*, p. 125; cf. Childs, *Exodus*, p. 69.

132. See, e.g., McEvenue, 'Speaker(s) in Ex 1-15', p. 228 ('the vocation narrative is interrupted after 3:12'); Moberly, *Old Testament*, pp. 16-20.

be a milestone in Israel's (hi)story. It would then be strange if this was only an accidental happening at the (narrative) moment in question.[133]

In this connection another conception should be mentioned, although not very popular. According to this way of interpreting the background of the question is (D) the idea that a new revelation requires a new divine name (see sec. 4c). Seen in this way, the question implied by the request is: 'What name can cover the new appearance of God, the appearance to Moses?' The request for a divine name is then connected closely with the idea that such a name has a certain sense. What is also important is that in this case the question of the Israelites does not simply intend to test the reliability of Moses and his announcement indirectly but that it is a clear demand for legitimization (this view belongs therefore to option IV).

Authors who interpret the request in this way relate it more or less closely to the motivation and aims of Moses' sending by God.[134] The question is then notably with what divine name should the plan to liberate Israel from Egypt (3.7-10) be connected (D.1).[135] According to this interpretation, the question would prepare the introduction of the divine name Yhwh or that of Ehyeh in connection with this plan. However, the evidence for such an interpretation is meagre. In fact, the divine discourse of ch. 6, in which the divine name is strongly tied to the exodus from Egypt (see further sec. 7, point 10a) guides the exegesis here. As for the call narrative itself, only the use of the name Yhwh in the speech introduction to 3.7 may point in this direction (see sec. 4a). However, in the call narrative as a whole, the connection of this name with the exodus is not so close because in 3.2 and 3.4 the connotations of this name are different.

b. A New Investigation of the Request and its Context

Is there not another possibility that supposes an intrinsic relation between the request for the name and the call narrative? There is one, one that can

133. In that sense, e.g., Wolfgang Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Studie zu 1 Sam. 9,1–10,16, Ex 3 f. und Ri 6,11b-17* (FRLANT, 101; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), p. 109: he states that the aim of the 'Elohistic' segment in Exodus 3 is the 'Koppelung von Sendung und Einführung des Jahwenamens', but understands this only as a combination.

134. In general terms: James G. Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1866), pp. 32-33; R. Alan Cole, *Exodus* (TOTC; London: Tyndale Press, 1973), p. 69. Cf. Nachmanides, *Commentary on the Torah: Exodus*, p. 34. The last author already states, among other things, that 'inherent in his question was the request that He inform him Who is sending him, that is to say, by what Divine attribute is he sent to the Israelites.'

135. Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (IBC; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1991), p. 63; Volgger, 'Wer bin ich?', p. 20.

be documented better. A fresh study of the request and its context will make this clear.

Let us start with the relationship of Moses' question to that of 2.14. This issue is only rarely considered because the narrative of Moses' 'becoming big' (2.11-15) and vv. 3.13-15 of the call narrative (2.23-4.17) are usually attributed to different sources.[136] Nevertheless, if we pose the question why Moses is so sure (cf. sec. 3) that the Israelites will ask for a divine name, within the narrative framework of the book of Exodus this question will lead us back to the dialogue of 2.13-14. The alternative would be to refer to the resistance met by prophets, but this is significant only on the level of narrator and reader.

In 2.13 Moses asks one of two fighting Hebrews: 'Why do you strike your Hebrew brother?' He gets then a counter-question (2.14): 'Who has placed you as (man [being]) an authority and judge over us?'[137] This evasive answer does not deal with the contents of Moses' question but only with his formal right to put it.[138] This first question of the 'Hebrew brother' is clearly one of legitimacy and not of reliability. A second question then follows in the same breath, 'Are you saying [that you are going] to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?'; it goes a step farther and concerns the issue of what Moses' question means, what implicit message it has.[139] The interlocutor reinterprets Moses' question in such a way that it can serve his purpose and proceeds to a counter-accusation.[140] Moreover, this second counter-question implies, very subtly, that Moses cannot positively answer the first question (see also v. 2.14b): the only person who could have authorized Moses is 'Pharaoh', the absolute ruler over Egypt; but by killing an Egyptian Moses has undermined this possibility. The accusing question of Moses and the response of the Hebrew brother could be under-

136. For a clear exception, see a work from the precritical period: Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of the Five Books of Moses* (London: Parkhurst, 1707), *ad loc.* (in fact, the Dutch translation was used: Henry, *Letterlijke en practicale verklaring van het Oude Testament*, I [Kampen: Kok, 1912], p. 301). On the relationship of the two narratives involved, see also Chapter 6, sec. 1 below.

137. About the construction of the predicate, see Gordon F. Davies, *Israel in Egypt: Reading Exodus 1-2* (JSOTSup 135; Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1992), pp. 119-20.

138. It concerns therefore a 'réplique au prétendu droit à l'acte propositionnel'; the reply indicates in particular that it is not appropriate to raise the topic at all (referential aspect). See Weyne, 'L'implicite dans le couple question-réponse', pp. 124-25.

139. It is therefore a 'réplique à la compréhension de l'acte propositionnel'; the reply attempts in particular to get hold of the contextual contents and the intentions of the questioner (pragmatic aspect). See Weyne, 'L'implicite dans le couple question-réponse', pp. 125-26.

140. Cf. Cassuto, *Exodus*, p. 23 ('The accused turns accuser'); Fretheim, *Exodus*, p. 44 ('The accuser becomes the accused').

stood as elements of a literary-judicial pattern.[141] However, an essential element is missing here: the verdict. The counter-attack is apparently very effective, and therefore Moses does not pursue the case but fears instead Pharaoh's revenge!

All these features of the question in 2.14 prepare and suggest a certain reading of the question of 3.13. But the exact wording of 3.13 has to confirm this supposition. In this respect, especially the predicate of Moses' announcement, '(he) has sent me to you', needs attention.

It is obvious that *šlḥ*, 'send', is a keyword in the text. The verb is connected not only to the title 'the God of your fathers' in Moses' question but also to the names Ehyeh and Yhwh in God's second and third answer respectively. These names serve clearly as identifications of the one who has sent Moses to the Israelites. In the narrative *šlḥ* appears for the first time in the commission of v. 10: 'Go now, I send you to Pharaoh; bring my people, the Children of Israel, out of Egypt!' After Moses' objection, 'Who am I . . . ?', God reintroduces the word in his motivation of a sign, offered alongside his support: 'this [is] the sign that I myself have *sent* you' (3.12). At that moment, because of the way it is employed, the use of the word *šlḥ* may still be only reminiscent of its use in connection with saviour figures elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[142] This picture changes, however, in v. 13: Moses' direct question, 'What shall I say to them?', implies that in the future he will function as messenger of God. In fact, his preceding words have already prepared this in a subtle way when he said 'The God of *your* fathers has sent me to you' and not 'The God of *our* fathers': the Israelites are referred to as addressees of his sending.[143]

In the Hebrew Bible the word *šlḥ* with God as subject serves to mark the divine origin of an activity. Linked to speaking, it always concerns prophecy. This is also true if elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible 'being sent' is at stake in one way or another. In a number of such texts the divine origin of

141. See the insightful article of Asnat Bartor, 'The "Juridical Dialogue": A Literary-Judicial Pattern', *VT* 53 (2003), pp. 445-64. It may also be noted that these ways of responding to an awkward question are well known from political discourse in modern days. See, e.g., Peter Bull and Kate Mayer, 'How Not to Answer Questions in Political Interviews', *Political Psychology* 14 (1993), pp. 651-66, esp. 658.

142. E.g. Judg. 6.14; 1 Sam. 9.16; also—in relation to Joseph—Gen. 45.5, 7, 8.

143. Contra Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott*, p. 136: he suggests that by speaking so Moses keeps himself apart from the Israelites. Cf. Seitz, 'Call of Moses', p. 237 (connecting this feature with option III). Differently, Berge, *Reading Sources*, pp. 121-22: he observes that speaking of 'your fathers' by Moses is also usual elsewhere and in particular in his speeches to the Israelites in Deuteronomy. Note also that in Exod. 3.15, 16 the title concerned will be put in the mouth of Moses by God himself.

words spoken is denied.[144] The origin may be located in the speaker's own heart (Num. 16.28; Jer. 14.14). Conversely, the divine origin of the words may also be strongly affirmed. This is the case in Jer. 26.12-16.[145] First, Jeremiah communicates to the people and the authorities: 'Yhwh has sent me to prophesy against this house' (v. 12). Subsequently, the word *šlḥ* is underlined by the adverbial adjunct *bᵉ'ᵉmet* (v. 15): 'Yhwh has *really* sent me to you to speak all these words.' In their response, the authorities link the words of Jeremiah decidedly to the name of Yhwh: '[It is] in the name of Yhwh, our god, [that] he has spoken to us' (v. 16).

The supposition that Moses is depicted as a prophetic figure is confirmed by the next verses. As spoken by God, the message commission 'Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel' (3.14,15) is reminiscent of the well-known 'messenger' formula of the prophets: 'Thus has Yhwh said' (Isa. 7.7; Jer. 2.2, 5; etc.).[146] It is also significant that subsequently (3.16-17) Moses is clearly understood to act as a messenger of God: first, he is urged by the commissioning formula 'Go . . . and say . . .' (see also, e.g., Isa. 6.9; cf. Jer. 2.2); second, he has to speak in the name of God, thus in the first person (cf. sec. 4d, last part), saying to the Israelites: 'I have taken account, yes, taken account of you . . .' (3.16). In addition, as a prophetic figure Moses is allowed to participate in the foreknowledge of God (3.18-22; in agreement with Amos 3.7) and even in the divine deliberations (see 4.1 in relation to 3.18; cf. Isaiah 6), and can testify to his mission by means of signs (4.2-9; cf. Deut. 13.2; Isa. 7.11, 14). In this connection it is also noteworthy that elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible Moses is explicitly related to prophecy.[147]

Although the prophetic resonances of the immediate context and even some words of Exod. 3.13-15 are often noted,[148] strangely enough Moses'

144. See Jer. 14.14, 15; 23.21, 32; 27.15; 28.15; 29.9, 31; 43.2; Ezek. 13.6; Neh. 6.12. In Jer. 28.9 it is used in a conditional context. See also, in relation to Moses, Num. 16.(28-)29.

145. Thus Berge, *Reading Sources*, p. 122.

146. For this relationship, see Vater, *Communication of Messages*, p. 65. Cf. 2 Sam. 7.8 (= 1 Chron. 17.7); Jer. 45.4; Ezek. 33.27, where both forms of the formula occur. The rightness of the term 'messenger formula' is contested by Andreas Wagner, *Prophetie als Theologie: die* so spricht Jahwe-*Formeln und das Grundverständnis alttestamentlicher Prophetie* (FRLANT, 207; orig. Habil.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), e.g., p. 311: in relation to prophets this formula does not always suggest that a message of God is transmitted but may also indicate that a prophet intervened as agent of God on the basis of his authorization as such (such an authorization would be illustrated by prophetic call narratives).

147. Num. 11.25; 12.6-8; Deut. 18.15; 34.10; Hos. 12.14.

148. See esp. Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, pp. 86, 87, 96-97; Richter, *Vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte*, pp. 112-14, 153-54, 154-55, 169; Moberly, *Old Testament*, p. 24.

question and the divine answers to it are only rarely and never completely interpreted in this light. A consequence of this disregard is that the transition to v. 16 and further becomes difficult in many interpretations, a fact that is only superficially considered in the literature.[149]

The preceding deliberations have therefore suggested that the commissioning of Moses is at the heart of the question of 3.13 (D.2). It is thus comparable to the question of 2.14, inasmuch as the authorization, not the contents of the message, is concerned. However, if the current form of Genesis is representative of what v. 3.13 presupposes, something v. 3.6 suggests, then we have to go a step further: against this background it is not only Moses' particular commissioning that is in question (whether God has really appeared to him will be especially at stake in Exod. 4.1!) but, more generally, the very act of God's sending someone. In a sense Moses is the first prophetic figure in history, as recounted in the biblical narratives.[150,151] No one had ever been sent before by God to convey a message on his behalf.

149. See, e.g., Schmidt, *Exodus*, I, p. 108: 'Auch setzt 16 nach 14f. "sehr abrupt ein; es wäre mindestens *w^{e}'attâ* ('und nun') zu erwarten"' (quoting Holzinger, *Exodus*, p. 8, and relating the difficulty of the transition then, as usually, to a combination of different sources).

150. Exegetes sometimes touch on this fact but do not really connect the question of the name with it. See B. Jacob, 'Mose am Dornbusch', *MGWJ* 66 / 30 n.s. (1922), pp. 11-33, 116-38, 180-200, esp. 24: 'Er *sendet* seine Boten. . . .Damit hat sich etwas noch nie Dagewesenes begeben: *Einen Menschen hat Gott dazu berufen, sein Wort und Werk bei andern Menschen auszuführen* und somit die Stein ins Rollen zu bringen. Mose soll der *Gesandte Gottes* werden. Das Gott ihn *sende* (*šlḥ*), darum dreht sich die ganze Unterredung (V.12, 13, 14, 15).' The italics of Jacob show that he emphasizes the being sent of Moses as such, not the change of the way of divine revelation. Childs, *Exodus*, 56, sees as background of the call narrative a tradition recognizing 'that a new element entered with Moses which set it [the Mosaic period] apart from the patriarchal period. The patriarchs received revelation in theophanies, but had no commission to transmit a message to others.' However, he does not connect Exod. 3.13-15 directly with this change of situation (cf. pp. 68-69). Moberly, *Old Testament*, p. 24: 'The text's concern with the disclosure of the name of God . . . is integrally related to Moses' role as the classic example of that phenomenon of prophecy by which historic Israel in practice encountered their God.' However, he links the depiction of Moses' role only in an extrinsic way to the fact of a first revelation of the divine name through him. T.E. Fretheim seems to go farthest with the following remark: 'Why is not the name revealed in 3:6 sufficient for Moses? The assumption seems to be that, if Moses has been commissioned to bring the people out of Egypt, Moses should have a divine name commensurate with this development [!!] in *God's* relationship [!!] with Israel.' See Terence E. Fretheim, 'Exodus 3: A Theological Interpretation', in S.E. Fowl (ed.), *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (BRMT; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 143-54, esp. 151. In fact, however, his attention focuses on the contents of Moses' commission (cf. n. 135 and the corresponding main text above).

151. This line of thought does not deny that already Abraham is called a prophet (Gen. 20.7). That title refers to his special relation with God as indicated by his visions

According to Genesis, God appeared to the ancestors and other persons in dreams, as a voice or incarnate, but only to address the persons in question, not others. If we understand the request of the Israelites against this background, it must be an expression of surprise and disbelief.[152]

As the general, undirected nature of his direct question to God ('What shall I say to them?') indicates, Moses seems to be baffled by this request of the Israelites.[153] Just as in the case of the question of 2.14 he does not know how or what to answer. How could he ever overcome their disbelief? He cannot appeal to precedent, to an existing divine name, for instance, Yhwh, to legitimize his mission, because such a name cannot 'cover' such a new undertaking as his mission. But what then? Indeed, even if he were to suggest a new divine name, how could that name convince the Israelites of the legitimacy of his mission? A legitimization needs recourse to what is already known.[154] In this light Moses' embarrassment is entirely understandable.

In conclusion, the view that the request for a name in Exod. 3.13 asks for a specific divine name related to the new way of revelation appears to be strongly supported by the close relation with the question of 2.14 and the connotations of the word *šlḥ*. It is crucial for the credibility of this view, however, that the answer of God indeed mentions a new divine name: Ehyeh (3.14b). By its nature (see sec. 4d) this name is especially appropriate to the new revelatory situation. As a first-person word, it expresses the perspective of God himself, and consequently indicates an intimate encounter with him. As such it is pre-eminently suitable for what is at stake, the representation of God by Moses to the Israelites.[155] This name is the divine counterpart of

and his participation in God's consultations (Genesis 18). See K.A. Deurloo, 'Abraham, profeet (Gen. 15 en 20)', *ACEBT* 9 (1988), pp. 35-46.

152. According to Berge, *Reading Sources*, p. 119, the question of the people asks either for information or seeks verification of the commission. There is, however, no reason to contrast these issues so strictly.

153. Jacob, *Exodus*, p. 67 (German: p. 60). See Gen. 44.16; Josh. 7.8; Ezra 9.10 for similar questions (all in the first person; differently, Jer. 13.21, in the second person).

154. Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott*, p. 145: 'Legitimation ist aber normalerweise Rückgriff auf Bekanntes.' (From this, Fischer concludes that the divine name asked for—according to him Yhwh—must be known to the Israelites, but this conclusion seems me a little too hasty.)

155. Cf. Hans Kosmala, 'The Name of God (YHWH and HU')' (orig. 1963) in Kosmala, *Studies, Essays and Reviews*, I. *Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), pp. 1-4, esp. 2: 'When Moses, therefore, is asked to say: " 'I am' has sent me to you," it means that he should not speak of this god in the third person, as people might speak of him in his absence, but in such a way that it became obvious to them that God had personally appeared and presented himself to Moses as existing and active and speaking in the first person.' Heinisch already connected the use of Ehyeh to the speaking of a messenger in the first person, although, according to him, the change from Ehyeh to Yhwh does not arrest the attention. See Heinisch, *Exodus*, p. 52.

the old, well-known name Yhwh, and therefore does not appear out of the blue. However, without clarification, this new name would remain mysterious and free-floating.

6. *The Statement of Exodus 3.14a: Its Construction and its Function*

The study of the syntax of the divine statement serves as a crucial test for the interpretations mentioned and proposed. Let us first of all look at how *'ehye* and *'ašer* function in relation to each other within the statement *'ehye 'ašer 'ehye*.[156]

a. *A Name and an Explicative Subordinate Clause*

As already noted (sec. 1), the divine statement is sometimes interpreted as a sequence of a name and its explanation: 'Ehyeh, for I am / will be.'[157] That would prepare the introduction of the name Ehyeh in v. 14b in a straightforward way. Genesis 31.49 is adduced as the most comparable case: '[therefore he called it] also Mizpah, for (*'ašer*) he said: "May Yhwh keep guard between you and me."'[158] However, in that sentence *'ašer* is not followed immediately by an explanation of the name but by a verb introducing a quotation (*'amār*, '[he] said'). This shifts the explanation to another communicative level:[159] what is said by a narrative character (Laban) is presented as an explanation for the reader. This is not the case with the statement of Exod. 3.14a, in which the subordinate clause is part of the statement of Yhwh to Moses.

The most important issue, however, concerns the use of the particle *'ašer*. As will be obvious from the interpretation concerned of Exod. 3.14a but

156. The first three syntactical interpretations are mentioned by Caquot, 'Énigmes d'un hémistiche', pp. 19-22 ; the fourth is added to these three by Alviero Niccacci, 'Esodo 3,14a: "Io sarò quello che ero" e un parallelo egiziano', *LASBF* 35 (1985), pp. 7-26, esp. 7-11.

157. E.g. van Daalen, 'Place Where YHWH Showed Himself', pp. 140-41; J. Schoneveld, 'Proeve van een nieuwe vertaling van "*èhjè ašèr èhjè*" in Exodus 3:14', *NTT* 30 (1976), pp. 89-98. This understanding has a long history. See Judah Halevi, *Kuzari,* IV,3, literally translated: 'But say to them "Ehyeh" and its explanation [is] *'šr 'hyh*—it means the present [one], who is present to you when you seek me.' (The current English translations are not adequate; see, however, the French one of Touati, mentioned in n. 95 above.) Also Ibn Ezra gave this interpretation in his Torah commentary. He is followed by others, such as J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Reimer, 3rd edn, 1899), p. 70 (orig. 1876): '*Bin*—sintemal ich bin'.

158. Schoneveld, 'Nieuwe vertaling van Exodus 3:14', p. 92.

159. Berge, *Reading Sources,* p. 118 note.

also from other interpretations treated later, the use of *'ašer* is in fact no less important than the far more debated function of the verb in question, *hyh*. Generally speaking, it can be questioned whether *'ašer* ever functions as a conjunction in Hebrew and does no longer have its far more usual, but very general, function as a relative marker.[160] In Gen. 31.49 the relative subordination could be expressed with some difficulty in English: '[he called it] Mizpah, *at which* he said . . .' (cf. also *'ašer* in Gen. 2.11; 10.14), but that is not always possible. In any case, the way an item needs to be translated in another language should not be confused with its function in the source language (a translational fallacy)!

b. *An Identifying Sentence with a Congruent Relative Clause*
Another way of interpreting the divine statement is illustrated by the translation: 'I am the one who is.' The first *'ehye* is often said to be identifying; the second would have an 'existential' sense. The translation in the Septuagint is rather frequently understood to be an example of such an interpretation.[161]

The Function of hyh. With this way of interpreting we touch on the function of the verb *hyh*. Formerly, it was assumed to have a concrete and dynamic primary meaning, that of 'becoming', 'happening', or 'being active' (sometimes summarized under the heading of 'existential' meaning). Inasmuch as its function as copula (which includes that of identifying) was taken into account, this was considered to be a degeneration of the primary meaning.[162] This view has exerted considerable influence until now; but in recent years more formal approaches have questioned this view seriously.

Generally speaking, clauses with *hyh* and so-called nominal or verbless clauses have the same type of construction. This is exemplified by instances of the formula of being with someone (*Mitseinsformel*), notably of divine presence; it may be used with *hyh* (e.g. Exod. 3.12; Judg. 6.16) or without it (e.g. Judg. 6.12; 1 Sam. 10.7; Jer. 1.8).[163] In the context of its contrast with nominal clauses, the primary function of *hyh* appears to be to indicate tense

160. Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis* (diss.; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002 [found online]), pp. 295-300.

161. See, however, Chapter 4.

162. See Carl Heinz Ratschow, *Werden und Wirken: Eine Untersuchung des Wortes* hajah *als Beitrag zur Wirklichkeitserfassing des Alten Testaments* (BZAW, 70; orig. diss.; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1941), passim; see esp. his rendering of Exod. 3.14a: 'Ich wirke als der (was) ich wirke' (p. 83).

163. See further Rüdiger Bartelmus, *HYH: Bedeutung und Funktion eines hebräischen 'Allerweltswortes'—zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage des hebräischen Tempussystems* (ATS, 17; orig. Habil.; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1982), pp. 155-60 and 190-95.

and mood by means of its conjugation forms.[164] According to its main function it could be called a '*tense copula*': *hyh* connects subject and predicate by putting them in a certain relationship in time but without describing the nature of that relationship more closely.[165] By contrast, the so-called verbless clauses constitute a relationship between these constituents on the basis of their syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties (at least a difference in definiteness),[166] but are in principle not marked by time reference (unless there are temporal adverbs).[167] In this book the term '*copulative clauses*' is used as a generic term that encompasses both *hyh* clauses and verbless clauses (the latter could also be called copulative clauses in a strict sense).

It is still under discussion whether in addition to its temporal-modal function *hyh* could also have *a meaning of its own*. This question is especially acute when the verb is apparently used absolutely: without adjective, noun, prepositional phrase, or something comparable. A few remarks should be made concerning this issue.

(1) In itself the verb *hyh* does not differentiate a stative sense ('being') from a mutative one (e.g. 'becoming').[168] More generally, like many other 'stative' Hebrew verbs, *hyh* does not distinguish between a state and the arrival of that state, between the continuous and the ingressive aspect.[169] In itself *hyh* only presents, in particular, a qualification or location as being actual in the past or the future or started or starts

164. See Bartelmus, *HYH*, passim, e.g., pp. 92, 102, 113-14; Cameron Sinclair, 'Are Nominal Clauses a Distinct Clausal Type?', in C.L. Miller (ed.), *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), pp. 51-75. See also sec. 6e, first part, below.

165. According to Alessandro Lenci, a copula always connects subject and predicate by putting them in a time relationship. See Lenci, 'The Structure of Predication', *Synthese: An International Journal for Epistemology, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* 114 (1998), pp. 233-76. However, in my view Lenci overstates the role of time-reference in predication and even in verbs in general.

166. About the issue of a hierarchy in definiteness, see the articles by J.W. Dyk and E. Talstra, K.E. Lowery, and E. van Wolde in Miller, *Verbless Clause* (see n. 164).

167. According to John Lyons, this was also the original situation in Indo-European languages. See Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 322-23. It is also important that he considers the so-called present tense in a language such as English as actually 'unmarked' for time reference (p. 306).

168. For this distinction, see Charles H. Kahn, *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 2nd edn, 2003 (the 1st edition appeared as a part of a multivolume work: *The Verb 'Be' and its Synonyms,* VI [FoundLang.Sup 16; Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973]), p. 195. The word 'mutative' has been chosen here and not the alternative 'kinetic' because in the cases concerned *hyh* does not seem to indicate the process of change but only the fact of a new element-class relation. See Bartelmus, *HYH*, esp. p. 112.

169. Ernst Jenni, 'Lexikalisch-semantische Strukturunterschiede: hebräisch ḤDL—deutsch "aufhören/unterlassen"', *ZAH* 7 (1994), pp. 124-32, esp. 127-28. He gives many examples, such as *mlk*, 'be king' and 'become king'; *yd'*, 'know' and 'learn.'

to be actual then.[170] In this respect, *hyh* is not more concrete than the verb 'be' and other Indo-Germanic equivalents, though it is often thought to be, presumably from a nineteenth-century evolutionary understanding; on the contrary, it is even more abstract because the Indo-Germanic correlates also indicate a state in a strict sense.[171]

(2) If *hyh* is used without a further predicate, one might try to recover this from the context. However, this attempt at restoration appears to be difficult in many cases: there may be no (or no adequate) preposition present in the context (e.g. Exod. 8.11; 21.22, 23), or the noun or pronoun that is supposed to situate the subject may lie several verses back (e.g. Exod. 5.13, cf. 5.10; 9.28; cf. 9.25), or even follow after some clauses.[172] This last situation is exemplified in an answer of Job to one of his friends: 'Please turn back, let [there] be no unrighteousness!' (Job 6.29). This is followed, but only after another clause, by a sentence with the locative-existential particle *yēš* and a prepositional phrase: 'Is there (*yēš*) [any] unrighteousness on my tongue?' (v. 30). Already this outline suggests that the difficulty of restoring a complement, notably a prepositional phrase, may be more or less considerable, and therefore the transition to cases in which such a move is no longer appropriate is gradual. In the last cases, what is presupposed by predication, being-present-somewhere, becomes more salient.[173] Since this predication is expressed by *hyh*, this verb starts to mean *occurring* or *being present* and therefore to situate the subject in a very general, vague sense.

Genesis 1 underlines this conclusion. The recurring phrase '[there] was evening and [there] was morning' might be connected to 'over the face of the waters' (v. 2; in the cases of 1.5, 8) and to 'on the earth' (v. 11; in the cases of 1.13 etc.), respectively.[174] However, if this phrase did indeed suppose a strong connection with a certain place, then it would require a recommencing of the counting of the days after the change of place in v. 11, but that is not attested. Therefore it seems to mean only a general, vague localization, as already suggested by the translation.

Closely related to this general (para)locative use is the application of *hyh* in the sense of 'existing' (i.e. being somewhere, wherever that may be). In this case, not only things but also persons may function as subject. See, e.g., Ps. 33.9 (parallel with *'md*, 'stand'); and Obad. 16; Job 10.19 (cf. 3.16); Sir. 44.9, respectively. See further the particular cases of Eccl. 1.9; 3.15.

(3) Some texts illustrate clearly that *hyh* may also have a mutative connotation when it is used absolutely. In these cases the verb is paralleled by *qwm*, 'arise' (Isa.

170. Cf. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, p. 395: 'the copula verb in its more elementary uses means *that some attribute* (property, location, etc.) *belongs to some subject*.' This definition is too reminiscent of the Aristotelian distinction between substances and accidents.

171. Cf. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 194-98.

172. Contra Johannes P. Floss, 'Verbfunktionen der Basis *HYY*', *BN* 30 (1985), pp. 35-101. In Floss's view, *hyh* is devoid of any meaning, because it would be possible to restore the complement in every case. However, he does not take into account the difficulties of this restoration.

173. Cf. Kahn, *Verb 'Be',* p. 397.

174. Thus Johannes P. Floss, 'Schöpfung als Geschehen?', in H.M. Niemann, M. Augustin and W.H. Schmidt (eds.), *Nachdenken über Israel, Bibel und Theologie* (Festschrift K.-D. Schunck; BEATAJ, 37; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1994), pp. 311-18.

7.7; 14.24) or *'bd*, 'perish' (Jon. 4.10) and can be translated 'appear' or 'take place'. See also Gen. 1.3, 6, in which it has the meaning of 'coming into existence'.

Since the mutative sense is essentially a connotation, based on the context, the dynamic conception of *hyh* is wrong. It is finally based on a translational fallacy, being inspired by its occasional rendering in Western European languages with 'becoming', and the like, and the specific uses of *way^{e}hî* and *w^{e}hayâ* as macrosyntactic devices, classically rendered with 'it came to pass' (e.g. Exod. 2.23) and 'it shall come to pass' (e.g. 4.8, 9, 16), respectively.[175]

Congruence. What is not less characteristic for this type of interpretation is that the second *'ehye* of Exod. 3.14a is rendered in a language such as English in a different grammatical person than the first one. The similarity of these two verb forms in Biblical Hebrew is considered the consequence of a certain congruence rule in this language.[176] This rule can be formulated as follows: if the (pro)nominal head of a relative clause is represented as the subject in that clause and this head constitutes the nominal predicate of the main clause, then the verb form in the relative clause agrees with the subject of the main clause. An example of this 'congruence rule for predicative relative clauses' is found in 1 Kgs 13.14: '[Are] you the man of God who has come [*bā'tā*, second person] from Judah?' (see also Judg. 13.11; 1 Chron. 21.17). In a second group the relative clause consists of a free (headless) appositive (non-restrictive) one. An example is: 'I [am] Yhwh, your god, who has brought [*hôṣē'tî-*, first person] you [*-ka*] out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of serfs' (Exod. 20.2).[177] Such sentences can be derived

175. See Viktor Ber, *The Hebrew Verb HYH as a Macrosyntactic Signal: The Case of* wayhy *and the Infinitive with Prepositions Bet and Kaf in Narrative Texts* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2008).

176. E.g. E. Schild, 'On Exodus iii 14—"I Am that I Am"', *VT* 4 (1954), pp. 296-302; J. Lindblom, 'Noch einmal die Deutung des Jahwe-Nahmens in Ex. 3,14', *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 3 (1964), pp. 4-15. See also J. Joosten, 'The Syntax of Relative Clauses with a First or Second Person Antecedent in Biblical Hebrew', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52 (1993), pp. 275-80 (the word 'antecedent' as used there is to be distinguished from that of 'head' of the relative clause!); Holmstedt, *Relative Clause*, pp. 23-28. The last two authors also deal with cases of congruence different from the one concerned here. To my knowledge, the first author referring to the congruence rule in relation to Exod. 3.14a was August Knobel, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (KEH; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1857), p. 28.

The authors supporting this type of interpretation always translate Exod. 3.14a in the present tense, although strictly speaking that is not necessary. Probably the statement would lose much of its attraction as a definite identification of God if translated for instance in a future or modal sense. Also the possibility of translating 'I am *what* is' is never considered, although *'^{a}šer* leaves this possibility open (cf. sec. 6c, second last paragraph, below).

177. Similarly: Gen. 15.7; Exod. 29.46; Lev. 19.36; 25.38; 26.13; Num. 15.41; Deut. 5.6; and further Lev. 20.24; 1 Sam. 26.16. Neh. 9.7, can be considered an instance of

from a sentence with a nominal main clause and a relative clause as the nominal predicate ('I [am] [the one] who has brought . . .'). In the remaining cases of congruent relative clauses, the relative clause is directly connected with (a) a pronoun of the first or second person, with (b) a pronominal suffix of these persons combined with a prepositional prefix or object marker, or (c) refers to the person that is explicitly addressed.[178,179]

Specificational or Descriptional Identification. All the sentences of the first two groups just mentioned are identifying (as such therefore distinguished from predicational ones; cf. sec. 6c). It should be observed, however, that such sentences can function in two ways.[180] The sentence can have a 'specificational' function, which specifies a value for a variable.[181] 'Simple' clauses that illustrate this function are found in Exod. 9.27. In that verse Pharaoh says: 'Yhwh [is] the righteous [one], I and my people the wrong [ones].' Let us concentrate on the first clause. In this connection it may be asked what is the subject and what the predicate. The opinions vary.[182] In

this group if 'Yhwh God' is one name, but will be an example of the first group if 'god' serves as head noun before a restrictive clause: 'the god who . . .'.

178. See (a) 1 Sam. 25.33; 2 Sam. 2.5; Ezek. 16.52; 2 Chron. 2.5; (b) 1 Kgs 8.23-24; Jer. 5.22; Ezek. 16.59; (c) Isa. 51.17; Jer. 32.17-20; Joel 4.4-5/3.4-5; Ps. 71.19-20; Dan. 9.15.

179. The cases referred to in this paragraph have first of all been extracted from Schild, 'On Exodus iii 14', and Lindblom, 'Noch einmal die Deutung des Jahwe-Nahmens' (see n. 176), and especially the critical review of Bertil Albrektson, 'On the Syntax of *'ehye 'ăšer 'ehye* in Exodus 3:14', in Ackroyd and Lindars, *Words and Meanings* (see n. 18 above), pp. 15-28; subsequently they were complemented by cases found by means of the computer program Quest (Prof. Dr E. Talstra *et al.*) of the VU University of Amsterdam.

Schild, 'On Exodus iii 14', p. 298, tries to catch all the congruence cases concerned under one rule: 'If the governing substantive is the subject of a relative clause and is, in the main clause, equated with, or defined as, a personal pronoun, then the predicate of the relative clause agrees with that personal pronoun.' Since the personal pronoun is not always present, this definition is not precise enough.

180. The terminology for and characterization of the functions of the two types are borrowed from Renaat Declerck, *Studies on Copular Sentences, Clefts and Pseudo-Clefts* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), esp. pp. 5-10 and 95-99. The two types involved concern only a part of the different types Declerck describes for copulative sentences (besides specificationally and descriptionally identifying sentences also predicational sentences, identity statements and definitions).

181. Cf. Declerck, *Studies on Copular Sentences*, p. 2: 'A specificational sentence is one whose semantic function is to specify a value for a variable. Thus, the sentence *The one who stole the money is Fred* is specificational because it specifies a value (Fred) for the variable "the X who stole the money."'

182. Cf. Miller, *Verbless Clause*, p. 11 (C.L. Miller herself, referring to the NJPS version and F.I. Andersen), pp. 83-84 (R. Buth), p. 227 (A. Niccacci). Of course, what is

terms of definiteness, the subject must be Yhwh as a personal name (most definite), the predicate 'the righteous one' as a nominalized adjective (less definite).[183] But what seems more relevant in this case is the question what is the topic, and what the focus (newly asserted information). This is not immediately clear. The concept of specification shows here its usefulness. In this case 'the righteous one' serves clearly as variable (in the case of the contest it may concern Pharaoh or Yhwh), and Yhwh as the value attached to it (the one who is singled out). This example also illustrates well that a specification implies a contrast: Yhwh is in the right, not Pharaoh.

Another example is the answer to the question of 1 Kgs 13.14: '[Are] you the man of God who has come from Judah?' This answer reads merely, 'I' (*'anî*); in other words, 'I am' (similarly Gen. 27.24; Judg. 13.11). A third instance is the following sentence in 1 Chron. 21.17: *'anî hû' 'ašer ḥāṭitî*, 'I [am] he who has [literally, have] sinned.' It will be discussed more closely because the statement of Exod. 3.14a is often thought to be similar to it.[184] It is clear that King David takes the blame for what went wrong, and he does so explicitly in contrast with possible others ('these sheep, what they have done?'). The specificational function can in general be made explicit in English by formulating the sentence as an it-cleft sentence, in the case of 1 Chron. 21.17: 'It is I who have sinned.' The transformation makes clear that the relative clause functions as the topic and the first-person pronoun as the focus. It should be added that 1 Chron. 21.17 as it stands in Hebrew can be considered an instance of a cleft sentence.[185] The sentence in question is the rendering of the clause *hinnê 'ānokî ḥāṭātî*, 'Notice: [as for] me, I have sinned', in 2 Sam. 24.17 (but a simpler clause form is of course possible; cf. 'I have sinned against Yhwh' in 2 Sam. 12.13). Clefting serves in general to bring the focus of a simple sentence out more clearly.

The phenomenon of *cleft sentence* is usually ignored in syntactical discussions of Biblical Hebrew, but, although rare, it is not exceptional. Another instance is 2 Sam. 2.4b, a sentence often emended,[186] but without sufficient evidence. The statement '[It is] the men of Jabesh-Gilead who buried Saul' might be understood as only a test case presented to David. More probably, the informants expect or at least sus-

here at issue is also dependent on how subject and predicate are defined.

183. In this case the grammatical subject is concerned, with which the predicate shows congruence. See also n. 166 above about the definiteness hierarchy.

184. Schild, 'Exodus iii 14', pp. 300-301. This comparison presupposes that clauses with *hyh* correspond to nominal, verbless clauses, as argued above.

185. Cf. Alviero Niccacci, 'Types and Functions of the Nominal Sentence', in Miller, *Verbless Clause* (n. 164 above), pp. 215-48, esp. 229, 239(-42).

186. Cf. S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn, 1913), p. 239. He speaks of 'an unnaturally worded sentence' but declines to emend it.

pect that David will punish these people, like, conversely, the Amalekite resident in ch. 1, although apparently mourning the defeat of Israel, felt confident of being rewarded when he said that he had killed Saul, David's long-time adversary. In both these cases David acted, however, in a counter-expectational way (cf. 2 Sam. 4.9-11; cf. further the usual slaughter after a regime change; for this see, e.g., Judg. 9.5; 1 Kgs 14.10; 15.29; 16.11; 2 Kgs 10.17; 11.1).

In all probability, other instances of cleft sentences occur in 1 Sam. 12.6 (also often emended!); 2 Kgs 18.22 (= Isa. 36.7); Jer. 41.9; Ezek. 38.17; 1 Chron. 5.36 (but this example may also be descriptionally identifying, see below). More or less related to this ('it'-) kind of cleft sentence are the many ('TH'-) instances of *ʾašer*-clauses with or without a nominal head preceded by the demonstrative pronoun *ze*, *zōʾt* or *ʾelle* ('this / these [is the one /are the ones] who . . .'; e.g. Gen. 6.15; 35.26; cf. Exod. 6.26 with *hûʾ*), and further those preceded by the interrogative pronoun *mî* or *mâ* (e.g. Gen. 44.15; Judg 21.5).

Note that in these sentences a third-person pronoun is sometimes found between subject and subject complement (nominal predicate). This pronoun probably has the function of a specificational marker.[187] Instances with this pronoun are Ezek. 38.17; 1 Chron. 21.17; examples without the pronoun are 1 Sam. 12.6; 2 Sam. 2.4; 2 Kgs 18.22 = Isa. 36.7. In the instances of *ʾašer*-clauses preceded by an interrogative or demonstrative pronoun, the pronoun is found only in Esth. 7.5 and 1 Chron. 12.16. The use of the pronoun in this context seems therefore typical of a later phase of Biblical Hebrew.

If it were in line with 1 Chron. 21.17, Exod. 3.14a could be translated as 'It is I who am.' In the context of the Hebrew Bible (see Jer. 2.4-28; Isa. 41.21-29; 44.8-20), it would then probably be heard as a reference to God as someone who exists and shows himself to be effective in contrast with the others gods who do not.

Although the sentence of 1 Chronicles would be most similar to Exod. 3.14a, there are clear differences between Exod. 3.14a and 1 Chron. 21.17. If we bypass differences in time reference or aspect, we can first of all note the absence of the third-person pronoun *hûʾ*. Whether this is significant remains a question. Nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible does it occur in *hyh*-clauses in a predicate position, but the number of cases of *hyh* followed by an independent relative clause functioning as a nominal predicate is very limited.[188] What is also noteworthy is the absence of an independent per-

187. Concerning the specificational function of this pronoun, see Jacobus A. Naudé, 'The Third Person Pronoun in Tripartite Verbless Clauses of Qumran Hebrew', in H.J. Simon and H. Wiese (eds.), *Pronouns—Grammar and Representation* (cong.; LA, 52; Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2002), pp. 161-81, passim. The conclusions of the investigation of the same phenomenon in Biblical Hebrew by Takamitsu Muraoka seem to point in the same direction. See Muraoka, 'The Tripartite Nominal Clause Revisited', in Miller, *Verbless Clause* (n. 164 above), pp. 185-213.

188. There is only the remarkable example of Gen. 33.9: 'Let be [remain] yours what [is now] yours.'

sonal pronoun such as *'anî*. Such a pronoun is in general, however, not a prerequisite for an identification by a *hyh*-clause (but it might be necessary in the case of a specification).[189] It is sometimes assumed that the congruence rule involved requires an overt subject in the main clause, one in the form of an independent personal pronoun,[190] but the number of cases in the Hebrew Bible is limited here too.[191] The statement of Exod. 3.14a differs in another respect from the specificationally identifying sentence in 1 Chron. 21.17: there already before King David has said that he has sinned (v. 8), whereas the being of God was not as such dealt with or alluded to earlier in the call narrative.

What should be added furthermore is that identifying sentences can also have a 'descriptionally identifying' function. The descriptive element of the sentence gives additional information that makes it possible for the hearer to identify the person or thing in question more completely. An example of this is the self-introduction in 3.6: 'I [am] the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' It may be supposed that Moses understands that the 'I' refers to the speaker who speaks from the burning bush, the spiritual being behind it. Therefore in a sense a specification is implied, since something is singled out as the cause of the fire. However, on the basis of the self-introduction Moses can back up this identification, can connect the speaker with what he already knows.[192] The introductory sentence of the Decalogue is another example: 'I [am] Yhwh, your god, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of serfs' (Exod. 20.2). In this case the information given serves rather as reaffirmation of what is already known.

If the statement of Exod. 3.14a is conceived as descriptionally identifying, it is understood as 'I am the one who is.' In this case the subject of the main clause serves as topic and the relative clause as focus. This interpretation is, however, open to objections. There is no sentence in biblical Hebrew with a really similar construction. In other cases the headless relative

189. Cf. with such a pronoun: 2 Sam. 15.34; 1 Chron. 11.20; and without it: Gen. 40.13; 1 Sam. 28.16 (but with a subject in the parallel clause); 1 Kgs 3.21; Ps. 27.9; Job 30.9. These instances are extracted from the list of identification cases given by Bartelmus, *HYH*, pp. 118-19.

190. Thus Albrektson in his critical review of the conception; see 'Syntax of *'ehye 'ăšer 'ehye*', p. 24.

191. There exist somewhat related sentences without it: see Jer. 5.22; Ezek. 16.59, with a verb form in the first and second person but without personal pronoun in the main clause followed by a corresponding appositive relative clause.

192. Evelien Keizer: 'the descriptive element provides information which allows the hearer to link the referent of the construction to his/her "knowledge base".' See Keizer, 'Close Appositions', in C. de Groot and K. Hengeveld (eds.), *Morphosyntactic Expression in Functional Grammar* (FGS, 27; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 381-417, esp. 404.

clause always serves as an appositive clause (e.g. Exod. 20.2). Moreover, it remains unclear what the relative clause thus understood would really add to the information already given (e.g. that he is sending someone). Is a description, for instance, that God is really, effectively there suitable in the context?

In conclusion, it appears that given all the differences of the statement of Exod. 3.14a from a typical specificationally identifying sentence as that of 1 Chron. 21.17 its interpretation as such a sentence is improbable. Its interpretation as a descriptionally identifying sentence cannot be excluded as yet, however, even though there are no closely similar cases in Biblical Hebrew and its sense would then be somewhat hazy. Nevertheless, before we make up our mind about this issue, let us take another way of interpreting it into account.

c. *An Idem per idem Sentence*

The statement of Exod. 3.14a is most often translated as 'I am who I am' or 'I will be who I will be.' It is then understood as an *idem per idem* construction, or, in other words, as a sentence with a '*paronomastic* relative clause'. In that case one clause is subordinated to another; the clause that is second repeats essentially only words of the preceding clause (to put it differently, it expresses itself *by means of* the *same* words),, and subject and predicate remain the same in both clauses.

About the *terminology* the following could be said. The expression 'idem per idem' is especially used in exegetical discussions in English. This is done after the example of S. R. Driver.[193] The expression has been borrowed from logic and indicates there a definition by means of what has to be defined (therefore a circular definition).[194] This corresponds with what Driver writes in an earlier article in relation to Exod. 3.14a: '*what* he will be is left undefined, or *defined only in terms of himself'* (latter italics mine).[195] In all probability the point of departure was therefore the logical sense of the expression. However, when Driver introduced it

193. See S.R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1892), p. 43 note: 'On the *idem per idem* construction in this passage [1 S 23.13], see the author's *Notes on Samuel*, ad loc.' In the latter work the construction is discussed but not named (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1st edn, 1890, p. 146). In the second edition of the *Treatise* instances of idem per idem are also mentioned but also there the term is still not used (1881, p. 50 note).

194. See, e.g., Christian Thiel, s.v. 'Idem per idem', in J. Mittelstrass (ed.), *Enzyklopädie Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie* (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1984), p. 188.

195. S.R. Driver, 'Recent Theories on the Origin and Nature of the Tetragrammaton', in *Studia biblica* [I] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), pp. 1-20, esp. 16-17, cf. also 15, 17.

in Hebrew studies and biblical exegesis, it had already in principle separated itself from this background and become the designation of a literary device. For even before introducing the term, Driver had already stated that this 'Semitic idiom . . . is employed where either the means, or the desire, to be more explicit does not exist.'[196]

Especially in German Semitics and biblical exegesis the construction is referred to by the term 'paronomastic relative clause' (*paronomastische Relativsatz*). Without doubt this is done under the influence of H. Reckendorf and, in particular, T.C. Vriezen.[197] In general and rhetorical literature the term paronomasia is usually applied to (1) a play on words that are different in meaning but similar in sound. In this connection it is noteworthy that under this term an article describes Exod. 3.14 (with *'ehye*) as a play on the divine name Yhwh.[198] However, the meaning Reckendorf attributes to it is different; he describes paronomasia as (2) a matter of relatedness of root or stem forms.[199] In such a conception very diverse phenomena fall under this term, ranging from a phrase (syntagm) such as *šîr ha-šîrîm*, 'song of songs', or *l^{e}-dōr dōr*, 'from generation to generation' (Exod. 3.15b), to complex sentences such as the statement in Exod. 3.14a. This definition of paronomasia has a long German tradition, as editions of the Brockhaus encyclopaedia and its predecessors in the nineteenth century show (s.v. 'Paronomasie' or 'Annomination'). Both meanings have their background in classical rhetorical literature. In this literature, the term points in the first place to the use of words related in sound; playing with their meaning is a secondary aspect.[200] Note that the term 'relative clause paronoma-

196. See Driver, *Notes on Samuel,* pp. 185-86 (1st edn, 1890, p. 146); similarly in Driver, *Exodus*, pp. 362-63 (at Exod. 33.19, but then in connection with the term idem per idem); cf., however, p. 40 (at Exod. 3.14: 'it is implied . . . that Jehovah's nature can be defined only in terms of itself'—therefore still in this sense in 1911!).

197. H. Reckendorf, *Über Paronomasie in den semitischen Sprachen* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1909); see esp. pp. 162-67 (p. 167 with Exod. 3.14a); cf. 172. For Vriezen, see his article '*'Ehje 'ašer 'ehje*', p. 498.

198. In that sense it is used by Barry J. Beitzel, 'Exodus 3:14 and the Divine Name: A Case of Biblical Paronomasia', *Trinity Journal* n.s. 1 (1980), pp. 5-20, esp. 19. Beitzel contrasts this interpretation as paronomasia with that of etymology but in doing so he imposes modern distinctions on this verse, forgetting that the relation between word form and meaning was not seen as arbitrary in biblical times. The grammatical relationship of Ehyeh and Yhwh suggested by the text points in fact to something more than only a paronomastic wordplay.

199. Reckendorf, *Paronomasie*, p. 1: 'Unter Paronomasie wird im Folgenden verstanden eine syntaktische Beziehung zwischen zwei oder mehreren stammverwandten Wörtern von gleicher oder verwandter Bedeutung.' He had predecessors in Semitics; see E. König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik im Bezug auf der biblische Literatur* (Leipzig: Weicher, 1900), p. 291 (s.v. 'Annomination'); but with him the other conception of paronomasia also played a part (König, *Stilistik*, pp. 286, 292, 295-98).

200. See J.M.C. Crousen, *De herhalingsfiguren in de stijl van Quintus Curtius Rufus* (diss.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971), pp. 55-107, esp. 56 (after J.M.G.M. Brinkhoff, 1935); cf. R. Dean Anderson, *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms* (CBET 24; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), p. 93.

sia' is rather imprecise because this term may also cover sentences such as 'all the "eats" that are eaten' (Gen. 6.21).[201]

In exegetic literature the term *tautology* is sometimes used in relation to the construction of Exod. 3.14a, but usually only in passing, among other things in an obviously pejorative sense by critics of this syntactical understanding.[202] However, in linguistic studies it is the current term for the type of construction in question. It should nevertheless be observed that the term tautology (lit., 'saying the same') is often used differently. In rhetorical literature, 'tautology' is usually defined as a repetition of the same semantic content in different words (e.g. '*I myself personally* believe . . .'), a repetition often qualified as unnecessary or superfluous because it does not give new information.[203] By contrast, in linguistic studies, the term concerns primarily the repetition of the same word or of words of the same stem in one sentence.[204] However, the view of Ludwig Wittgenstein, according to which the term means a statement that because of its logical form is always true,[205] has also had its impact on linguistics (notably in the designation of a sentence such as 'Either he will come or he won't' as a [disjunctive] tautology).[206]

201. See further Reckendorf, *Paronomasie*, pp. 156-62.

202. Cf. Arnold, 'Divine Name', p. 127; Childs, *Exodus*, p. 596; and Schild, 'On Exodus iii 14', p. 296 ('If it [the verb "to be"] denotes existence . . . the passage as commonly translated makes little sense; it is but a confusing tautology'), respectively. An exception is the extensive use of the term (besides a limited one of 'idem per idem') in the article of R.P. Carroll, 'Strange Fire: Abstract of Presence Absent in the Text—Meditations on Exodus 3', *JSOT* 61 (1994), pp. 39-58, esp. 46-47. In his word choice he was obviously influenced by the conference on Exod. 3.14 convened by the literary and cultural critic George Steiner in 1992 under the title 'The Great Tautology' (see p. 39). Cf. Steiner, 'The Great Tautology', in Steiner, *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978–1996* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), pp. 348-60.

203. See, e.g., Sylvia Chalker and Edmund Weiner, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), s.v. 'tautology.' Cf. the analysis of Madeleine Frédéric, 'La tautologie dans le langage naturel', *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature* 19.1 (1981), pp. 313-26. She also points out the essential difference of the linguistic conception with this rhetorical conception.

204. This seems also to apply to current Semitic studies. See Mohammed Farghal, 'Colloquial Jordanian Arabic tautology', *Journal of Pragmatics* 17 (1992), pp. 223-40 (by indicating on p. 224 that tautologies have been neglected in Arabic linguistics Farghal demonstrates that he does not know Reckendorf's philological study).

205. See, e.g., B. Buldt, s.v. 'Tautologie', in J. Ritter and K. Gründer (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, X (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), cols. 932-39, esp. 936.

206. In this sense Anna Wierzbicka, therein following S. Levinson. See Chapter 10, 'Boys Will Be Boys: Even "Truisms" Are Culture-Specific', in Wierzbicka, *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction* (Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs, 53; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), pp. 391-452 (a shorter version is found in *Language* 63 [1987], pp. 95-114), esp. 400, 401-402, 432-33.

The expression 'idem per idem' is used in this book mainly for practical reasons: it is specifically used for the sentence construction in question.[207] Moreover, as the logical use of the expression is in fact not very frequent, it will therefore not easily lead to confusion.

A Typology of its Function. The idem per idem construction would either (a) give the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a an indefinite sense (e.g. 'I am whoever I am') or (b) intensify its nature as stating something (such as 'Surely I am there!').[208] The discussion on the meaning of this construction has been occurring for more than fifty years. If we really want to advance the matter, we should proceed cautiously and in a methodologically sound way. In this connection we should also take into account that a literal translation may not reproduce the effect of the original text because the meaning of a sentence with the construction concerned varies from one language to another.[209,210] In other words, we cannot trust our sense of language in this case. Moreover, if we talk about indefiniteness and intensification we should also indicate what we mean by that. In my view, we can best start from the most evident cases and then ask what determines the observed effect.

207. The demarcation of another term, 'pankoinon', is different. For this term see Henry W. Johnstone, 'Pankoinon as a Rhetorical Figure in Greek Tragedy', *Glotta* 58 (1980), pp. 49-62; also Johnstone, '*Pankoinon* as Paradox', *Rhetoric Review* 19 (2000), pp. 7-11. See also Chapter 4, sec. 2b (including notes).

208. See, e.g., (a) Dubarle, 'Signification du nom', pp. 7-8,11; (b) Jacob, 'Mose am Dornbusch', p. 129 ('Es ist ein Satz, welcher über die Tatsache vergewissern, aber des Details entheben will'); Vriezen, '*'Ehje 'ašer 'ehje*', pp. 506-508 (cf. the general remarks on pp. 500-503).

209. See Chapter 10 in Wierzbicka, *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics*, pp. 95-114. In this chapter about tautology only idem per idem instances of the anterior type (see later in the main text) are dealt with; see pp. 402-403 and 431-38.

210. This is also the reason that in general the interpretation of Exod. 3.14a and similar biblical sentences by linguistic studies about tautology are not particularly helpful because they usually deal only with its rendering. See, e.g., Éric Buyssens, 'Tautologies', *La linguistique* 6.2 (1970), pp. 37-45, esp. 40 (such constructions seem to be interpreted by him as affirmative). Cf. also the remark of Johannes Bulhof and Steven Gimbel, who intentionally refer to the Hebrew background of 'I am who I am' in their article 'A Tautology Is a Tautology (or Is It?)', *Journal of Pragmatics* 36 (2004), pp. 1003-1005, esp. 1005: 'If we understand this passage as God's assertion that the Divine nature is sharply delimited—either one is the All-being or one is not: one is not God to a greater or lesser degree—then we have a deep tautology [i.e. based on the logical features of languages] that is legitimately translated *as a deep tautology* from Hebrew to English.' However, their interpretation is obviously based on the English translation (a translational fallacy!), which is most naturally understood as a self-affirmation. As will become clear in other chapters (esp. Chapter 5), logical features of language play a role in the phenomena involved, but they are used in different ways by different languages.

When David is fleeing from Jerusalem because of the approach of his rebellious son Absalom, he makes his situation explicit in a discussion with one of his men through the following words: 'I [am] going where [wherever] I [am] going!' (2 Sam. 15.20, with a participle as verb form). When much earlier he and his people were fleeing from Saul the narrator notes similarly: 'they went about where [wherever] they could go about' (1 Sam. 23.13, with the verb in the hithpael). What also matters in this connection are the words that the prophet Elisha says to the woman whose son he saved before: 'settle (as a migrant) where [wherever] you may settle (as a migrant)' (2 Kgs 8.1). Because of an imminent famine she has also to flee. In all these cases the construction gives the sentences involved an indefinite effect. In fact, in these cases almost every author shares this view because the situation is so evident: fleeing is in general a situation in which the point of departure is clear but the future definitely not (cf. Gen. 16.8a and b). There are, however, clearly different idem per idem instances. In comparable miserable circumstances Yhwh says, according to the prophet Jeremiah, in response to the people's question, 'Where shall we go to?': 'who [is (going)] to death [is (going)] to death, and who [is] to sword [is] to sword, and who [is] to famine [is] to famine, and who [is] to captivity [is] to captivity' (Jer. 15.2; virtually identical, Jer. 43.4). Whereas in the previous verse Yhwh said that 'his soul will not turn to the people', the present verse makes explicit what his non-intervention implies. It indicates that no escape is possible from the imminent dangers. In other words, it endorses the bad things that will happen as a consequence of the non-intervention or at least concurs with it. If we ask ourselves what might determine the difference in effect of the sentences of 1 Sam. 23.13, 2 Sam. 15.20 and 2 Kgs 8.1 on the one hand, and those of Jer. 15.2 and 43.4 on the other, then we can observe a difference in the way the sentences are framed. From the cases dealt with we can reasonably hypothesize that a sequence of a main clause followed by a subordinate clause has an indefinite effect, whereas a sequence with the reverse order has an intensifying effect.

The two fundamental linguistic phenomena involved are a headless (or 'free') relative clause and repetition. The situation in which the relative particle of a relative clause is not preceded by a nominal phrase can easily result in some indefiniteness. The fact that words are repeated is typical of an idem per idem construction and may favour the prominence of these words within the text. According to the hypothesis, which of these two effects is brought out is primarily not a matter of context (as usually thought), but of clause order and therefore of syntax. Let us examine the other idem per idem instances in Classical Hebrew to check whether they support this hypothesis or not.

Let us first look at the instances of the 'anterior type', those with a subordinate clause preceding the main clause. Most related to the instances

mentioned above in Jer. 15.2 and 43.4 are phrases used in 2 Kgs 25.15 and Jer. 52.19, although they are only rarely considered in this context. In these examples, not only is the relative clause followed by a main clause but the former also seems to form an apposition: 'the firepans . . . and the basins . . . , which [were (of)] gold [were (of)] gold, which [were] silver, [were] silver, the captain of the guard took [them].' Most probably the idem per idem construction emphasizes the really golden and silver nature of the objects, whereas the order of the phrases makes clear that the objects were not taken away as utensils but for their substance. The sense effect is therefore a matter of the words repeated.[211] All the instances of the anterior type mentioned up to now consist of verbless, 'copulative' sentences. A different example, one with an imperative in the main clause, is Moses' instruction concerning the manna on Sabbath's eve: 'What you would bake, bake [it], what you would boil, boil [it]!' (Exod. 16.23). Before this, twice the normal quantity of manna has been collected; the instruction is now to bake and cook not part of it the next day but this part already now. The following sentence connects well with this interpretation: 'and all the [= this] surplus [in relation to the normal quantity of food], put it aside for yourself as what should be kept until the [next] morning.'[212] Realizing the necessity to send his Benjamin to the viceroy of Egypt, Jacob expresses his resignation to what seems to be inescapably forthcoming with the words: 'As for me, if (*ka'ašer*, lit., lit. 'like that' / 'as') I am bereaved [of children], I am bereaved [of children]!' (Gen. 43.14). The same is true for Esth. 4.16: 'If (*ka'ašer*) I am lost, I am lost.' It may be noted that in the last two instances afformative verb forms are used (to render their sense, instead of 'am' one could also translate with 'will have been'). What is important in the instances of the anterior type is that the nature of the relative clause is different from case to case: it may define the subject, the object or the adjunct. However, in all

211. Differently, William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 442 (with references); Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2004), p. 526. In this connection it should be noted that most of the objects described are referred to in 1 Kgs 7.49-50 or Exod. 25.29-39 as being made of pure gold. Cf. J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 777 note; cf. p. 780 (he mentions these references but interprets the repetition nevertheless as distributive).

212. The usual interpretations of the idem per idem sentences ('bake and cook [all] what you like / need') and of the surplus ('all what is left'; root *'dp*) in the next sentence do not make sense in the context of the Sabbath instruction. For a survey of them (with references), see Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, II (HCOT; trans. S. Woudstra ; Kampen: Kok, 1996), pp. 348-49 (cf. also the rendering of the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, in the translation of Houtman, *Exodus,* p. 348 note: 'Bake today what you would have to bake tomorrow'). For *'dp* as meaning 'to be excessive' see *HALOT,* II, s.v., p. 793.

the instances the relative clause precedes the main clause and indicates what will be talked about (in technical terms: it is promoted as the topic that will be commented on); nevertheless, by repeating only the predicate of the relative clause, the main clause only underlines a feature of what has already been said: the action signified by the verb or the condition indicated by the noun. It is on this basis that the construction can be used to indicate that alternatives cannot, need not or should not be considered.[213]

The instances of 1 Sam. 23.13, 2 Sam. 15.20 and 2 Kgs 8.1 belong to the posterior type, those with a main clause followed by a relative clause. Other instances are: 'I shall be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and shall show compassion on whom I will show compassion' (Exod. 33.19); 'Give them, O Yhwh, what you may give them' (Hos. 9.14, a disputed example, as will be discussed later). In this connection the following cases could also be mentioned: 'I shall speak what I will speak (as word [*dābār*])' (Ezek. 12.25), and 'Send, please, by the hand (*b^{e}-yad*) [of whomever] you may send' (Exod. 4.13), because the head nouns concerned have only a formal function (different from the cases belonging to the next group). In particular the instances of Exod. 33.19 and Ezek. 12.25 are, together with that of Exod. 3.14a, attributed to an emphatic sense and therefore distinguished from the cases discussed above, those of 1 Sam. 23.13; 2 Sam. 15.20; and 2 Kgs 8.1. If one does so, the intensifying function of the construction has to be seen as depending on the context. From a comparative point of view, such a position could certainly be supported, as will later be shown, for an Indo-Germanic language, Greek (see Chapter 4, sec. 2b; cf. also Chapter 5, sec. 2 for Latin). However, for Hebrew, such a conception is improbable. It is striking that all the cases under discussion have God as subject. In fact, the view concerned supposes therefore that God would have its own particular grammar! That is only imaginable in particular circumstances (cf. the notion of existence with its particular syntax, which arose as a consequence of scepticism in relation to the gods; see Chapter 4, sec. 2a). This does not apply here. Moreover, the divine examples do not really rule out an interpretation in an indefinite sense, as is already obvious from the literature and also will be shown later in this chapter (see sec. 6f, middle part). In all these cases, the impact of the idem per idem construction can be described as follows: in the sentences concerned, the relative construction suggests

213. According to Gregory L. Ward and Julia Hirschberg tautological utterances mark alternatives as not relevant. See Ward and Hirschberg, 'A Pragmatic Analysis of Tautological Utterances', *Journal of Pragmatics* 15 (1991), pp. 507-20. In my view, the thesis is not valid for all tautological instances throughout all languages. Even in English it does not apply to the idem per idem instances of the *posterior* type on p. 519 (note the indications of indefiniteness in their context: 'Hell, *I don't know!* It means what it means' and 'I am *not trying to suggest anything*. It says what it says, in my view' [italics mine]).

that a complement (object, adjunct or nominal predicate) will be specified; however, because the relative clause essentially describes this complement in terms of what has already been said, its content remains in fact undefined.[214] This is why this construction can be and is indeed used to signify indefiniteness, notably the indefiniteness of the complement. Concerning this complement, the sentence construction indicates that it is impossible, needless or undesirable to be more specific.

The interpretation of Exod. 3.14 is often complicated by the fact that the different types of idem per idem construction are confused.[215] However, it should also be observed that there does not exist a simple dichotomy between instances of the posterior and those of the anterior idem per idem type.

First of all, there is also another group of (posterior) idem per idem instances, one in which a noun or noun phrase functions as head of the relative clause. As already indicated, in the cases of Exod. 4.13 and Ezek. 12.25 the head concerned does not add much to the content; therefore these cases belong in fact to the posterior type as dealt with. The nature of 2 Kgs 23.16 remains to be defined because of additions in the second clause (see also Exod. 32.34; 2 Kgs 7.17; Ezek. 14.23). A real case in point is found in Deut. 29.15, where Moses refers back to the trek from Egypt to the borders of the promised land: 'we passed through the nations you passed through.' The subject changes here only seemingly. In this case the indefinite effect of the construction generates presumably in combination with the plural of the head noun the impression of a multitude (see also Ezek. 36.20; 1 Kgs 8.63, the latter with a plural of the post-construct noun: 'Solomon offered the offer of peace-sacrifices that he offered').[216] What argues in favour of the correctness of this assumption is that the multitude is sometimes made more or less explicit by a quantifier modifying the head noun (Deut. 1.46: 'many'; 9.25: 'forty'). Moreover, the instance of 1 Kings is followed by the mention of a gigantic quantity of sacrificial animals.

However, there also exist some other particular instances of the posterior type. In Sir. 44.9 we read: 'they have ceased (to be, *šbt*) as/when (*ka'ašer*) they have ceased (to be)', preceded by 'but of them there is no remembrance (*zkr*)', and followed by 'as if they have not been, they have been/ they are.' It is comparable in clause order to the other instances of the posterior type,

214. Cf. Norbert Kilwing, 'Noch einmal zur Syntax von Ex 3,14', *BN* 10 (1979), pp. 70-79, esp. 74 (and 76).

215. See, e.g., Vriezen, Kilwing (mentioned in previous notes) and further J.R. Lundbom (see sec. 6f).

216. Cf. G.S. Ogden, 'Idem per idem: Its Use and Meaning', *JSOT* 53 (1992), pp. 107-20. He attributes a 'totality' nuance to nearly all the idem per idem sentences, including that of Exod. 3.14a.

but it does not seem to have an indefinite effect, but, on the contrary, an emphatic effect.[217] However, in this case the clauses are not connected by a relative particle in a strict sense but by the conjunction *ka'ᵃšer*. The use of affirmative verb forms seems also to play a part. Also 1 Sam. 20.26 deserves attention in this connection: 'he [is] unclean *kî* he [is] unclean!'[218] Since the understanding of *kî* as 'because' does not seem to make sense, it is understandable that many exegetes take it as an emphatic particle: 'he is not clean, surely he is not clean!'[219] However, there are not obvious clues to such an understanding.[220] Presumably, the sentence construction underlines the self-evident nature of the reason given for the speaker concerned (one might ask oneself: how could a speaker of Classical Hebrew express this self-evidence other than in this tautological way?).[221] In consequence, the

217. Similarly Patrick W. Skehan in Skehan and A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1987), p. 497: 'for when they perished, they perished completely'; Eric D. Reymond, 'Prelude to the Praise of the Ancestors, Sirach 44:1-15', *HUCA* 72 (2001), pp. 1-14, esp. 4: 'they perished (forever) as soon as they perished.' Differently, Jeremy Corley, 'Sirach 44:1-15: An Introduction to the Praise of the Ancestors', in G.G. Xeravits and J. Zsengellér (eds.), *Studies in the Books of Ben Sira* (cong.; JSJS, 127; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008), pp. 151-81, esp. 172: according to him it expresses indeterminacy of time ('whenever'), but he does not give other examples with *ka'ᵃšer* in this sense. According to the preceding and following clauses the sentence under discussion more likely indicates that when the persons concerned die nobody will think of them anymore and that therefore their end is definitive.

218. Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein mentions it as an instance of paronomasia, however, with the sense of vagueness. See Kedar-Kopfstein, *The Vulgate as a Translation: Some Semantic and Syntactical Aspects of Jerome's Translation of the Hebrew Bible* (diss.; Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1968), p. 252.

219. Cf., e.g., J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel,* II. *The Crossing Fates* (SSN, 23; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), pp. 328-29; David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 515-16 (both treating other interpretations).

220. Cf. Carl M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle* kî (spec. issue JOTT; diss.; Dallas: SIL International, 2001), sec. 9.2.5, pp. 277-79. Follingstad himself classifies *kî* of 1 Sam. 20.26b as asseverative; see the table on p. 631 (translation of the subordinate clause: 'surely he is not clean'). Only the combination with 'repeated lexical items' could be an argument in favour of it (p. 278), but in this case this does not suffice (cf. the quoted example of Isa. 30.16, in which also the particle *'al-kēn*, 'therefore', is found).

221. Cf. the English example given by Ward and Hirschberg, 'Tautological Utterances', p. 518: 'X: On the one hand, you realize that your work isn't bad, because there's a lot of worse work out there. But on the other hand, you realize that *it's not bad because it's not bad*.' The authors comment: 'X implicates that one need not search for alternative reasons to justify the belief one's work is "not bad."' Another English example is described in Etsuzo Miki, 'Evocation and Tautologies', *Journal of Pragmatics* 25

cases of 1 Sam. 20.26 and Sir. 44.9 suggest that the hypothesis under discussion has to be modified: not only the clause order but also the nature of the connection between the clauses (and possibly more or less the verb form) determines the effect of the idem per idem construction.

The last refinements do not change the fact that the divine statement of Exod. 3.14 belongs most probably to the characteristic, paradigmatic instances of the posterior type, because of the use of the unspecific relative particle *'ašer*, whereas this particle is not related to a head noun (and possibly also because of the use of preformative verb forms; see further sec. 6e, last part). It is sometimes argued against its inclusion in this category that, different from other idem per idem cases, *'ăšer* in Exod. 3.14a is not preceded by the object marker *'et* or a preposition (a). However, in these other cases the use of these syntactical elements is necessitated by the syntax of the verbs concerned whereas their absence is inherent in the syntax of the 'tense copula' *hyh* (see sec. 6b, first part). Since the *idem per idem* phenomenon is determined by subordination of one clause to another and repetition of the words of the first by the second, the difference does not argue against the inclusion of Exodus 3.14a in the category of idem per idem sentences (b).[222]

Idem per idem or congruence. The idem per idem interpretation of the divine statement should be weighed against its interpretation as matter of relative clause congruence (sec. 6b, second part). Let us now discuss this question.

The question is first of all whether the two *'ehye*s have the same function. It is quite natural to assume that the first *'ehye* has a copulative function: it is followed by a headless relative clause, the equivalent of a noun phrase. As for the second *'ehye*, the picture is not immediately clear. If it is copulative, then the relative marker *'ašer* represents the subject complement (the nominal predicate) within the relative clause. If it is non-copulative (with a locative-existential meaning), then this marker represents the subject itself. These possibilities correspond to the interpretation of the statement as an

(1996), pp. 635-48, esp. 644. His general view that tautologies refer to shared knowledge by means of evocation will apply to the instance of 1 Sam. 20.26 (in speaking to himself Saul is referring to what is a usual reason for absence) but not to most of the other instances dealt with in the main text, e.g. not to the instances signifying indefiniteness (in this connection see, however, also Miki's own remark, p. 647 note).

222. See, on the one hand, (a) Schoneveld, '*èhjè ašèr èhjè*', p. 97; Niccacci, 'Esodo 3,14', p. 9; cf., on the other, Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott*, 149 note: 'Doch liegt die Deutung als Paronomasie nicht an der Form der Abhängigkeit [des Relatifsatzes], sondern an der lautlichen Ähnlichkeit.' The 'Form der Abhängigkeit' seems to concern the absence ('direkt abhängig') or presence of a preposition. In my view, Fischer's formulation is not as precise as it should be.

idem per idem case and as one with a congruent relative clause (see sec. 6b), respectively. To my knowledge, there exist no other possibilities.[223]

The last paragraph underlines that the interpretation of the divine statement also depends on the function of *'ašer* (cf. sec. 6a) and in particular on what this particle may represent in the relative clause.[224] Let us consider

223. Contra Caquot, 'Énigmes d'un hémistiche', p. 21; Bartelmus, 'Ex 3,14 und die Bedeutung von *HYH*', final chapter of *HYH*, pp. 226-35, esp. 230-31; a somewhat expanded version of this chapter is found in Bartelmus, *Auf der Suche nach dem archemedischen Punkt der Textinterpretation: Studien zu einer philologisch-linguistisch fundierten Exegese alttestamentlicher Texte* (Zurich: Pano, 2002), pp. 383-402; for the subject concerned, see pp. 394-96. In the the context of an idem per idem conception of Exod. 3.14a Caquot mentions the possibility of interpreting the second *'ehye* as predicative (that would mean a tautology amounting to a refusal to answer) as well as that of conceiving it as existential. Bartelmus conceives Exod. 3.14a as an instance of 'Paronomasie' but nevertheless states that the belonging to a predication of existence ('Existenzaussage') of the second *'ehye* 'is obvious (*offen zu Tage liegt*)', noting its formal structure as 'NG + 0', that is, a noun phrase not followed by another phrase (notably a nominal predicate). Without any substantiation he also remarks that always with relative clause paronomasia 'das wiederholte Wort einmal bezogen und einmal absolut erscheint' (pp. 231 note and 395-96 note, respectively). It is difficult to grasp why in a translation such as 'I will be who I will be' the second verb form should be understood as existential and thus not like the first, as copulative. What else can the relative particle represent in this case within the relative clause, except a subject complement? (Note, on the other hand, the difference from another famous sentence: 'Que sera, sera', 'Whatever will be, will be'; in this saying, both clauses have an obvious existential sense.)

Presumably, this way of thinking has to do with a semantic fallacy: the divine statement must concern God's existence in one way or another, and by implication (but is that really implied?) also the verb *hyh*. This misconception may go back as far as the translation of the Septuagint. In relation to meaning it does not distinguish sufficiently between the level of a sentence and that of its words. Note what James Barr says in a discussion of T. Boman's treatment of *hyh*: '[The] point is the danger of taking a case of a word along with its context and suggesting that the significance which is given through associations of the context is in fact the indicator value of that word.' See Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 69.

Under the influence of the semantic misconception in question, a major part of the *CBQ*-version of this chapter (see above n. 3) consisted of defending the possibility of an existential interpretation of *hyh* against its denial by Floss, 'Verbfunktionen der Basis HYY', passim (a passage now incorporated in elaborated form only in an excursus, see sec. 6b, first part above). As far as Exod. 3.14a is concerned, in my view Floss could have saved himself a lot of trouble: by overlooking the possibility of a copulative function of both *'ehye*s he is forced to an idiosyncratic treatment of this verse. Apart from 'Verbfunktionen der Basis HYY', pp. 83-88, see also Floss, '"Ich bin mein Name": Die Identität von Gottes Ich und Gottes Namen nach Ex 3,14', in W. Gross, H. Irsigler and T. Seidl (eds.), *Text, Methode und Grammatik* (Festschrift W. Richter; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1991), pp. 67-80.

224. Cf. Holmstedt, *Relative Clause*, p. 68.

relative clauses with *hyh* or a verbless construction but without resumption by a pronoun. In the majority of cases the particle represents then the subject. Thus we read, 'and [as for] every firstling of the offspring of the cattle *that* will be yours, the males [are] Yhwh's' (Exod. 13.12). It represents sometimes an adverbial adjunct: 'learn and see the place *that* his going is to' (locative, 1 Sam. 23.22); 'all the days *that* he will have been / he is, he will be lent to Yhwh' (temporal, 1 Sam. 1.28; see also 29.8; 2 Sam. 2.11). However, we do not find the relative particle functioning as subject complement. To put this remark into perspective, we have to take the syntactic possibilities into account. For instance, a sentence such as the following one would be evidently wrong: *'The person who I am did a lot of things'; and this is in all probability the case not only in English. Nevertheless, many languages show the possibility of an idem per idem construction with the copulative verb: 'I am what I am.' The restrictive conditions are then apparently not in force, presumably because the relative clause has only formally the function of subject complement but does not really modify the subject.

Although much remains to be clarified in this last respect,[225] let us now evaluate the two interpretations of Exod. 3.14a in question on the basis of our findings up to now. Both interpretations have no strict parallels in the Hebrew Bible. Their possibility or probability has therefore to be inferred. However, as noted above, if the statement is considered a matter of an idem per idem construction, the particularity in the form of the statement of Exod. 3.14a (without a preposition before *'ăšer*) can easily be explained. By contrast, there is not even one rather comparable instance of identification by a congruent relative clause because in other cases the sentence construction is always manifestly asymmetrical. Moreover, even if in this case formal symmetry were theoretically thinkable (by extrapolation), that does not mean that this possibility is also actually used. It may even be expected that, in order to avoid misunderstanding, a different functioning of the two forms of the verb *hyh* would be indicated in one way or another (e.g. the presence of an independent personal pronoun in the main clause). On the basis of similarity with other cases and also with a view to the clarity that may be expected of the nature of a sentence construction, it is therefore most reasonable to take the second *'ehye* in the same way as the first one.[226]

The conclusions from the preceding discussions can now be summarized as follows: the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a is in all probability an instance of an idem per idem construction and one of the posterior type

225. Unfortunately, some literature research did not result in more clarity about the restrictive conditions in question. Among other things, the following book was consulted: Christian Lehmann, *Der Relativsatz* (orig. Habil.; Tübingen: Narr, 1984), p. 211 note (with a few references).

226. Similarly Dubarle, 'Signification du nom', pp. 14-15.

(with an indefinite sense) in which both *'ehye*s have a copulative function. According to its construction, the statement is even as indefinite as possible. The reference to the first person is provided only by the verb form (not by a subject pronoun such as *'ānōkî*), and the connection between the main clause and relative clause occurs only by *'ašer* (which is not combined with a pronoun such as *hû'* or a head noun such as, e.g., *'lōhîm*). Also the verb form, belonging to the preformative conjugation, adds to the indefiniteness, as will be pointed out later (see sec. 6e, last part).

Predicational or identifying. A question that still remains is whether the idem per idem statement in Exodus is predicational ('I am *what*ever I am') or descriptionally identifying ('I am *who*ever I am'). In the first case, the predicate would say something about the subject in relation to some property (cf. Exod. 2.2: 'he [was] good'; 2:22 'A sojourner I have become in a foreign land').[227] The answer cannot be inferred from the construction of Exod. 3.14a itself because its syntax can be interpreted in both ways.[228] The question in v. 13 asks for a name, and in this context the divine statement is to be understood as descriptionally identifying because that is much more akin to the giving of a name than a predicational statement. In this way the statement is interpreted as backing up the reference to the subject, in other words as helping to identify the subject more closely, although in this case the backing up is drawn into the indefinite by the relative clause.

Another question concerns the time reference of the two *'ehye*s. It will be discussed, but first another conception of the divine statement will be dealt with. Its application to this statement is intrinsically tied to a certain understanding of how these verb forms relate to time.

227. Cf. Declerck, *Studies on Copular Sentences*, p. 55: 'Predicational sentences derive their name from the fact that instead of specifying a value for a variable (i.e. identifying a referent) they merely predicate something of the referent of the subject NP. In most cases this "something" is a characteristic, a role, a function or an indication of class membership.'

228. Contra Bartelmus, *HYH*, pp. 231-32 (*Texinterpretation*, pp. 396-97). His attribution of the first *'ehye* to 'classification' is founded in the idea (of C. Brockelmann, 1913) that 'der paronomastische Relativsatz gewissermassen das Indefinitpronomen "wer/was auch immer" ersetzt.' His conclusion confuses syntax and semantics. Cf., on the other hand, W. R[obertson] Smith, 'On the Name Jehovah (Jahve) and the Doctrine of Exodus III.14', *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 25 (1876), pp. 153-65, esp. 163. In this article, Robertson Smith rightly compares the construction with 'the well-known idiom, *[w-]šāma' ha-šōmēa'* to express the indefinite subject (2 Sam. xvii.9)', thus with a definite noun having indefinite meaning ('and somebody hears [it]'). Note that in Exod. 33.19 and Ezek. 12.25 the relative clause is preceded by *'et*, which usually functions as a definite object marker. The indefiniteness of Exod. 3.14a may therefore concern not only class but also identity.

d. *A Correlative 'Copulative' Sentence*

The two *'ehye*s of Exod. 3.14a are often translated with different tenses; for example: 'I am who I shall be'; 'I shall be who I am'; 'I shall be who I would be.'[229] In these cases the divine statement is translated as a '*correlative* sentence'. A case in point is found in Zech. 10.8: '(I will whistle them up . . .) and they will become numerous [*waw*-afformative] like (*k^{e}mô*) they have been numerous [afformative].'[230] There are also copulative cases, with *hyh* as the verb. One instance is found in Eccl. 3.15: 'That which (*ma-še*) has become / is (*hāyâ*), it [was] already; what (*'^{a}šer*) [is] to be (*h^{e}yôt*)/will be, has already been (*hāyâ*).' Note also 2 Sam. 15.34: '[It is] your servant [that] I, O King, shall be; servant of your father I [have been] in the past, now I [am] your servant.' A comparable case occurs in Job 10.19, where Job wonders whether it would not have been better if he had been still-born: 'as though (*ka'^{a}šer*) I had not been (*hāyîtî*), I would be (*'ehye*).' This case, however, is not typical since a negation is used in the subordinate clause but not in the main clause.

Purely from a grammatical point of view, the preformative (or 'prefix') conjugation forms of *hyh* (*'ehye*) could be understood as indicating future or posteriority (= relative future; in contrast with afformative or 'suffix' conjugation forms: past or anteriority).[231] Two reference points for the two *'ehye*s are then conceivable: the present moment of speaking by God and the time of the ancestors (see Exod. 3.13). Thus we get, 'I shall be (who) I would be.' In this connection the divine statement may refer to the promises

229. Although such a rendering is often found, only rarely is a grammatical or syntactical explanation for that given. But see Reisel, *Mysterious Name*, pp. 22-24: he translates 'I *shall* (show to) be, who I *would* (show to) be', suggesting that the second *'ehye* is an imperfect form with a preterite connotation; cf. also his reference to and rendering of Rashbam's interpretation: 'I remain who [according to My Promise] I was to be' (p. 15). See further Niccacci, 'Esodo 3,14a', pp, 10-11: he translates *Io sarò quello che ero* ('I shall be who I was'), understanding the second *'ehye* as 'passato continuo'. He refers to 2 Sam. 15.34 as prooftext. For a (different) rendering of this verse, see the continuation of the main text; for a criticism of his understanding of this verse, see Rüdiger Bartelmus, '*Prima la Lingua, Poi le Parole*: David Kimchi und die Frage der hebräischen Tempora', *Textinterpretation*, pp. 307-18, esp. 315-16. The issue of the proposed syntax should, however, be considered in a wider context than only the reference mentioned. Note also the rendering by means of different tenses already found in the Palestinian Targums, e.g., Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: 'I [am] he who was (*hwyn'*) and who [is] in the future (*'ŏtîd*) to be / who will be.' The verb form *hwyn'*, *h^{a}wênā',* functions as first person singular of the perfect in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. See Jerome A. Lund, 'The First Person Singular Past Tense of the Verb *hwh* in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic', *Maarav* 4 (1987), pp. 191-99.

230. Considered by Vriezen to be an idem per idem case but wrongly; see '*'Ehje 'a šer 'ehje*', p. 504.

231. See Bartelmus, *HYH*, pp. 54-66.

made to the ancestors, and it could therefore be rendered as 'I shall be who I said that I shall be.' We might then especially think of the promises of support and protection (cf. 3.12).

A different rendering of the two *'ehye*s is based on a contextual interpretation. This contrasts with the fact that they are identical in form. It supposes therefore that the contextual constraints are strong enough to overrule the effect of this identity. However, to my knowledge there are no other cases in which two subsequent identical verb forms elsewhere have to be interpreted as signifying different tenses if there are no clear syntactical clues (e.g. the use of the *waw* and the conjunction *kᵉmô* in Zech. 10.8). The correlative interpretation of Exod. 3.14a remains therefore unsubstantiated, whereas its idem per idem interpretation is supported by several similar cases. Also here (cf. sec. 6c, second last part) it should be realized that what is theoretically imaginable is not always actualized in reality.

e. *Tense, Aspect and/or Modality (TAM)*

Let us therefore return to the idem per idem conception and see what function the two preformative forms of *hyh* can have. The preceding correlative interpretation compelled us already to deal with the verbal system of Biblical Hebrew, but now we should take a broader view of this system by taking into account not only (relative) tense, but also aspect and modality. There is a lot of discussion about what is fundamental for Biblical Hebrew: at present in particular whether it is aspect, or a (relative) two- or three-tense system.[232] Some authors indicate explicitly that the verbal system was moving to a three-tense system, but differ in opinion how far this process had gone.[233] For our purpose, it is not really necessary to choose between one of the different options: what concerns us in the end is not the (semantic) basic function of the preformative conjugation in general

232. For a two-tense conception, see Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), sec. 19.1.3: the preformative versus the afformative conjugation as non-past versus past, a division corresponding in this grammar to that of aspect. See further Paul D. Korchin, *Markedness in Canaanite and Hebrew Verbs* (HSS, 58; orig. diss.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), esp. p. 308. Korchin investigated the verbal system of Biblical Hebrew in its continuity with that of Canaanite. He contrasts *yqtl-u* (here the preformative conjugation) with *yqtl-Ø* (in particular manifest in *wa*-preformative forms) as non-anteriority versus unmarked. As a consequence of his method, the afformative conjugation remains nearly out of consideration (but see sec. 6.3, pp. 327-33).

233. See esp. David Kummerow, 'How Can the Form *yiqtōl* Be a Preterite, Jussive, and a Future/Imperfective? A Brief Elaboration of the Form and Functions of the Biblical Hebrew Prefix Verbs', *Kusatu* 8-9 (2008), pp. 63-95, esp. 63 note: tense-prominent; cf., on the other hand, e.g., John A. Cook, 'The Hebrew Verb: A Grammaticalization Approach', *ZAH* 14 (2001), pp. 117-43, esp. 137: aspect-prominent.

but the (pragmatic) particular use of the preformative forms of *hyh* in the text of Exod. 3.14a.

The Verb Form as Expressing Futurity. The preformative forms of *hyh* are often translated and interpreted as indicating future time.[234] According to this understanding God says: 'I shall be whoever I shall be.'

In favour of this view it could be adduced that the majority of instances of *'ehye* elsewhere (at least 38 out of a total of 42) have a future reference.[235] However, this is only a statistical argument (leaving, moreover, aside instances of *hyh* with another person or number), thus at best suggesting a certain probability. In any case, there are alternative explanations (see the next two parts of this subsection), and therefore the likelihood of an interpretation of Exod. 3.14a as future related should be considered in relation to them.[236] With a view to this interpretation one could first attempt to show that a future reference or at least an expression of posteriority is a (or the) basic function of the preformative conjugation. Some authors think that this is indeed the case.[237] Even if one does not share this general view, one should take a particular circumstance into account: the verb *hyh* stands in opposition to verbless clauses (indicating present time or simultaneity), and as a consequence time reference in general and future reference for the preformative forms play a more obvious role for

234. E.g. Jacob, *Exodus,* p. 73 (German: p. 66); Pákozdy, 'Deutung des *Jhwh*-Namens', pp. 193-208, passim; Bartelmus, *HYH*, p. 228 (= *Textinterpretation,* p. 389); cf. Irsigler, 'Von der Namensfrage zum Gottesverständnis', p. 78. Already Theodotion and Aquila (see Chapter 4 below, sec. 2b, fourth part) and later the Graecus Venetus and Luther (Chapter 5, sec. 4a), decided in favour of a translation in the future tense.

235. Cf. K.-H. Bernhardt, s.v. *hāyāh*, *TDOT*, III, pp. 379-81, esp. 380. Leaving Job 3.16 and 12.4 as uncertain cases out of consideration, Bernhardt sees only Ps. 50.21 (optative meaning) and Ruth 2.13 (needing a rendering into the present tense) as exceptions. It is noteworthy that Bartelmus considers Ps. 50.21 as a future tense instance, understanding it as occurring in direct speech: 'you thought: "I will be like you"' (that is, like God; cf. Gen. 3.5). See Bartelmus, *HYH,* p. 171 (note). For my view on the instances in Job, see later in the present subsection.

236. In this respect it is striking that Bartelmus does mention the possibility of a general present, but does not discuss it ('kommt wohl kaum in Frage'). See *HYH*, p. 228 note (= *Textinterpretation,* p. 389 note). He seems even to ignore the possibility of a real modal interpretation completely (cf. 'als Modus verstanden bliebe die *imperfektive* Konnotation' [italics mine], only in *Textinterpretation,* p. 389 note).

237. See, e.g., again Bartelmus, *HYH*, pp. 54-66 (the preformative conjugation as indicating basically posterioriy). According to Jan Joosten, its main function is the expression of futurity as well as modality. Context determines which one is actually expressed. See Joosten, 'Do the Finite Verbal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Express Aspect?', *JANES* 29 (2002), pp. 49-70, esp. 64.

hyh than for other verbs.[238] This might be considered an anomaly of the verbal system, but it could also be conceived as an inequality in it that promotes the development of a three-tense system.[239]

Nevertheless, even if one accepts the plausibility of this reasoning, an interpretation of Exod. 3.14a as future related should be supported by referring to the context because of the presence of alternative interpretations. What is usually mentioned in this connection is the future reference of *'ehye* in the promise of v. 12a, therefore a verse in the near context. This is, however, only an argument if both *ehye*s are related to each other. The divine statement in v. 14 is indeed often connected more directly with this promise of support, and considered to be a kind of generalization of it.[240] However, the function of the two sentences is quite different: the clause of the promise in 12a can perhaps best be described as 'paralocative' (in reference to mental space), whereas the statement in 14a is identifying. In fact, nowhere else does *hyh* have the meaning of assistance without *'im* or a comparable preposition.[241] Without doubt the statement does not stand in opposition to the promise, but the indefinite effect of the construction has the result that

238. See G.S. Ogden, 'Time and the Verb *HYH* in O.T. Prose', *VT* 21 (1971), pp. 451-69, esp. 468-69; Robert Hetzron, 'On the Tense-System of Predictions with the Verb "Be"', in P. Wexler, A. Borg and S. Somekh (eds.), *Studia linguistica et orientalia* (Festschrift H. Blanc; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), pp. 136-43. Hetzron notes on p. 137 that '*yihye* is the only true future form ["will be"] in Biblical Hebrew' (but subsequently: 'though Ex. 3.14 and Ruth 2.13 do have cases of the present: *'ehye* "I am" probably for focus'). He points to the possibility of a certain duality in the tense system: according to him 'in many languages the verb(oid) "be" tends to have a tense system different from that of the other verbs in the same language' (p. 142).

239. Hetzron, 'On the Tense-System of Predictions with the Verb "Be"', p. 143.

240. This is a rather popular view in modern times. See, e.g., [Robertson] Smith, 'On the Name Jehovah', pp. 162-63 (referring also to G.H.A. Ewald); Pákozdy, 'Deutung des *Jhwh*-Namens', p. 204; Polak, 'Theophany and Mediator', p. 123 (the response of 14a 'transforms this promise into a declaration of principle'); Bernhardt, *hāyāh*, p. 381; Blenkinsopp, *Pentateuch*, p. 149. Sometimes it is connected with conceiving the preformative form as having imperfective sense (about this, see next part); see John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), p. 39; or with the interpretation type of sec. 6a, see van Daalen, 'Place Where YHWH Showed Himself', p. 141. The view is also often found in rabbinical Judaism. See Charles Touati, 'Ehye ašer ehye (*Exode* 3,14) comme "l'Être-avec . . ."', in Vignaux, *Dieu et l'Être* (see n. 84 above), pp. 75-84. See further the rendering of Exod. 3.14a by Targum Onqelos, according to Nachmanides: 'I will be *with* whom I will be.'

241. See Ibáñez, 'Ex 3,14a', pp. 381-82. Cf. already the view of August Dillmann, who observes 'so würde gerade die Hauptsache, auf die es ankommt, nicht ausgedrückt, sondern blos zu denken gegeben sein', and concludes from this that a 'derartige Sinnergänzing nicht angeht.' See Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (KEH; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1880), p. 31.

the solidarity of God with Moses and his people is not put at the forefront by the statement.

Linked to the future, the sentence expresses, according to its form, that the speaker will be something in the time to come (cf. 2 Sam. 15.34: 'I shall be your servant'; a headless relative clause is the equivalent of a noun phrase); because of the context it may be understood to be someone in the future for the Israelites. However, what kind of someone that will be remains open. This contrasts more or less with the context of promise and detailed instructions. With an interpretation of the answer of v. 14a as future related, the transition to that of v. 14b will also not be easy. The divine name Ehyeh would then have associations with the future ('I shall be'), but the accompanying verb form (*šᵉlaḥ-*, 'has sent') refers to the past. Understood in this way, v. 14b sounds therefore rather odd.[242]

The Verb Form as Related to the Present. Strikingly enough, most translations and interpretations of Exod. 3.14a do not support a reference to the future but to the present. This has already been so from the translations of the Septuagint and the Vulgate onward. Although a rendering in the present tense is very usual, a substantiation of it is only rarely found.

Sometimes, the translation into the present tense is obviously inspired by the notion of aspect. Aspect is most often considered to be the basic dimension of the Hebrew verbal system. In that case the preformative verb forms are in general qualified as 'imperfective', indicating a state or an event not bounded in comparison with the time implied or indicated by the context (in contrast with the bounded, 'perfective' aspect of afformative forms).[243] In relation to a stative verb such as *hyh*, the preformative

242. Note that although the German translation of Buber and Rosenzweig renders the statement of v. 14a in the future ('Ich werde dasein, als der ich dasein werde'), nevertheless the designation *'ehye* in v. 14b is translated in the present tense ('ICH BIN DA'). See Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung* (Cologne: Hegner, 1968), p. 158. The change from future to present in the translation of v. 14 by John Calvin in the French Genevan Bible of 1546 is comparable; see Chapter 5, sec. 4b.

243. In agreement with Bernard Comrie, aspect is usually related to the internal time structure of a situation, and the distinction between imperfective and perfective is described as incomplete versus complete. See, e.g., Bruce Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), sec. 29.6. My definitions of imperfective and perfective are influenced by the critical review of Ahmed F. Al-Tarouti, 'Dimensions of Aspect', *Scientific Journal of King Faisal University (Humanities & Management Sciences)* 2 (2001), pp. 197-230, esp. 216-19 (found online); see also the diagrammatic presentation of them by Annerieke Boland, *Aspect, Tense and Modality: Theory, Typology, Acquisition* (diss.; Utrecht: LOT, 2006), pp. 48, 49-50.

conjugation would most probably indicate continuity. To represent this as palpably as possible, one could translate Exod. 3.14a in the progressive tense: 'I am being whoever I am being.'[244] Elsewhere it is claimed that the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a would be '[th]e *sole* example in prose' of stative verbs with an aspectual value.[245] Such a singularity does not convince.

It should, however, be realized that the rendering in the present tense is not actually meant in the sense of 'I am now whoever I am now', therefore as being in opposition to the future and past. In fact, the divine statement is understood as a general statement: 'I am (always) who I am (always).' In particular the interpretations of Exod. 3.14a lead one to suspect that this conception is behind its rendering, although this is only rarely clearly expressed in connection with Exod. 3.14.[246] Such an interpretation seems to be based on the idea that the 'general present' is connected with preformative forms. This idea is not confined to an aspect conception of the Hebrew verbal system.[247] However, the link of the general present with preformative forms is not that simple.[248]

From a linguistic point of view the issue has to do with so-called genericity. Generic statements express generalizations about situations, objects or individuals. In this kind of statements Hebrew verbs may not occur only in the preformative conjugation but also in the afformative conjugation or a verbless construction. This fact raises the question why in Exod. 3.14a

244. In this sense Durham, *Exodus*, p. 39 (but with 'that' as relative pronoun); cf. Ibáñez, 'Ex 3,14a', p. 383.

245. Thus, Ronald S. Hendel, 'In the Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System: Situation, Tense, Aspect, Mood', *ZAH* 9 (1996), pp. 152-81, esp. 156-57 (italics mine). According to Hendel's view, the aspectual value only emerges if a verb form is put in a temporal context different from the tense that it usually indicates, such as the use of the preformative form in a present context in Exod. 3.14a.

246. Cf. Durham, *Exodus*, p. 39, who also (cf. n. 244) renders the sense of the statement as: 'I am . . . the One who Always Is'; Hendel, 'In the Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System', p. 157, who suggests as grammatical sense: 'I am one who is/exists enduringly.' See, on the other hand, Yoshinobu Endo, *The Verbal System of Classical Hebrew in the Joseph Story: An Approach from Discourse Analysis* (SSN, 32; orig. diss.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), p. 11 note. He mentions Exod. 3.14a as an example of a 'YIQTOL with present meaning for . . . an eternal truth'. It is the sole example of the verb *hyh* that he mentions in this connection (cf. also the quotation of J. Lyons on p. 60).

247. See Bartelmus, *HYH*, pp. 58-59 (mentioning 'iterative' and general in a single breath; with references); Joosten, 'Finite Verbal Forms Express Aspect?', p. 63.

248. See the pioneering investigation of John A. Cook, 'Genericity, Tense, and Verbal Patterns in the Sentence Literature of Proverbs', in Troxel, Friebel and Magary, *Seeking Out the Wisdom* (see n. 40 above), pp. 117-33.

the preformative conjugation has been chosen.[249] Presumably, the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a is closely related to statements with preformative forms that express something typical or usual (cf. Prov. 12.8: 'the twisted of heart are / will be to despise').[250] The most obvious instances are those in the third person, but in all probability Job 12.4 provides an example in the first person: ' [as one who is] a laughingstock to his neighbour/friend I am [*'ehye*] . . . , a just, perfect man [is] a laughingstock.' The generalizing dimension is indicated by the use of the third-person suffix ('his') instead of a first-person one in the predicate and confirmed by the following verbless clause with a similar content.[251] The question remains whether in the case of Exod. 3.14a there are factors promoting such a generalizing understanding. The only factor seems to be the request for a name in the previous verse, which concerns a general feature of a person.

Closely connected with the matter of genericity is the habitual function of verb forms, expressing a generalization over multiple episodes. In grammar such a function is traditionally attributed to preformative forms.[252] Conceived in this way, the divine statement could be translated as 'I am wont to be that I am wont to be.'[253] However, there are no obvious examples of preformative forms of *hyh* with a habitual function in a present time context.[254] Moreover, it is doubtful whether the context guides a reader enough

249. Cf. Antoon Schoors, 'The Verb *hāyâ* in Qoheleth', in D. Penchansky and P.L. Redditt (eds.), *Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do What Is Right? Studies on the Nature of God* (Festschrift J.L Crenshaw ; Winona Lake, IN : Eisenbrauns, 2000), pp. 229-38. He states that affirmative *hyh* in Eccl 1.9; 3.15; 6.10 and 7.24 refers to a timeless present (pp. 232-36).

250. See Cook, 'Genericity, Tense, and Verbal Patterns', p. 127. Besides these instances, he distinguishes those cases that demand a future-tense interpretation ('inevitably', 'eventually', or 'ultimately' could then be added in the translation) and those requiring a modal one (pp. 128-29).

251. For the first argument, see J.H. Kroeze, *Het boek Job* (COT; Kampen: Kok, 1961), p. 152. Cf. the literal rendering of David J.A. Clines: 'A "mockery-to-his-neighbor" I am.' See Clines, *Job 1-20* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), p. 279. For another example, see Job 17.6b (in the preceding clause the I-figure has been made a 'byword [*māšāl*, see LXX] of peoples'). Note that in both cases *'ehye* is clause-final.

252. See grammatical works such as Bartelmus, *HYH*, p. 59 (with references); Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, sec. 31.3e; van der Merwe *et al.*, *Reference Grammar*, sec. 19.3.4.

253. This is mentioned as a possibility by S. R. Driver but dropped in favour of a translation in the future tense. See *Exodus*, pp. 23-24, 40-41. In the *CBQ* version of this chapter (see n. 3 above), Exod. 3.14a was interpreted in this way (pp. 226-27).

254. De Vaux, 'Revelation of the Divine Name', pp. 65-66, gives Eccl. 1.9 as an example of the preformative form of *hyh* with a 'frequentative' function in a present context; in fact, it concerns the future ('will be' or possibly 'will again be'), as even his own translation suggests.

in this direction: obvious instances of *hyh* with this function elsewhere are usually modified by temporal adjuncts.[255]

Within the framework of a general present, the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a could more specifically be understood as a retranslation of the specific divine promise of Exod. 3.12 into a general statement about God's abiding presence.[256] This interpretation may raise a similar objection as its interpretation as a promise in the previous part (sec. 6e, first part): the form of the statement does not focus on presence (the relative pronoun is not, e.g., *ba'ᵃšer*) but on who or what God is (the relative particle is simply *'ᵃšer*). Moreover, the indefiniteness of its construction seems difficult to reconcile with a positive interpretation of the divine statement as a whole: 'I am (always) whoever I am (always)' sounds like a contradiction in terms.

The problem disappears if the statement is understood in an a more or less evasive sense (see secs. 1 and 2).[257] This interpretation and its particular problems will be discussed more closely later (in sec. 6f, first part).

The Verb Form as Signifying Modality. The preformative forms can also be interpreted in a modal way, thus in the sense of 'may', 'can', 'want', and the like. Although a well-known possibility of preformative forms in Biblical Hebrew,[258] it is only rarely taken into account for Exod. 3.14a.[259] Is

255. See Exod. 40.38; Num. 9.16; 1 Kgs 4.7; 5.28/14 (examples in a past-time context). Also the association with other verbs with 'frequentative' function can be relevant. Thus Ogden, 'Time and the Verb *hyh',* pp. 457-58 (cf. also 455-56). He adds: '[w]here the "frequentative" ethos of a passage is not unclear [*sic*; read *not clear*!], *hyh* reverts to its regular role of temporal indicator' (p. 458).

256. For this interpretation, see Graham I. Davies, 'The Exegesis of the Divine Name in Exodus', in R.P. Gordon (ed.), *The God of Israel* (UCOP 64; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 139-56, esp. 151. In this connection, Davies does not discuss, however, the verb form.

257. Bartelmus can connect the evasive interpretation with the future tense because he takes the moment of revealing the divine name as reference point. See *HYH*, pp. 232-33 (*Textinterpretation*, pp. 397-98).

258. See the grammar textbooks and Agustinus Gianto, 'Mood and Modality in Classical Hebrew', *Israel Oriental Studies* 18 (1998), pp. 183-98, esp. 188-91. His classification of ability is rather confusing (pp. 185-86: epistemic; p. 191: deontic). Presumably this is due to his traditional dual classification of modality. It would be better to subsume these 'dynamic' meanings under a distinct subcategory. See Boland, *Aspect, Tense and Modality*, p. 68; cf. 70, 71.

259. Cf. Kilwing, 'Zur Syntax von Ex 3,14', pp. 73-74, where he only mentions but does not really discuss the possibility of a modal interpretation and notably one in the sense of 'wanting' (*wollen*). See A. Niccacci, R. David (for both see next note) and Randall J. Pannell, 'I *Would* Be *Who* I *Would* Be! A Proposal for Reading Exodus 3:11-14', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 16 (2006), pp. 351-53. These authors argue for a cohortative interpretation. Already the author who seems to have been the first to acknowl-

it because by understanding the statement in this way God might appear even more capricious than if the statement is interpreted in the future tense? However, an important factor is also that modality as such did not receive much attention in Hebrew studies up to recently.

In this connection we should investigate what factors may promote the interpretation of the verb form in a modal direction. Modality is a basic function of the preformative conjugation, but whether this is actualized depends on the context. Let us first look at syntactical factors.

At first sight the hypothesis seems to be relevant that a preformative form of a verb at the beginning of a clause always has a modal function, whereas one occurring later in the clause often has a future sense (but then not always).[260] To check this hypothesis, all first-person preformative verb forms at the beginning of a direct discourse were investigated (that is, with reference to singular forms, from Gen. 6.7 to 2 Chron. 18.21). In these cases, it was not possible to refute the hypothesis. Nor, however, could the possibility of a future time reference be dismissed out of hand. There is therefore the danger of circular reasoning. What may nevertheless be rel-

edge the correspondence of the divine statement with other idem per idem sentences (without subsuming them under a particular term) supported a modal interpretation: see Moritz Drechsler, *Die Einheit und Ächtheit der Genesis: Oder Erklärung derjenigen Erscheinungen in der Genesis, welche wider den mosaischen Ursprung derselben geltend gemacht werden* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1838), pp. 11-12. He renders, 'ich bin, wer und was mir zu sein *beliebt*, oder wer und was ich sein *muss*.' He is followed in this way of translating Exod. 3.14a by Arnold, 'Divine Name', p. 128: 'I will be whatever I choose.' Note that most of these authors consider only the possibility of a voluntative interpretation out of the many possibilities of a modal interpretation.

260. See E. Talstra, 'Text Grammar and Hebrew Bible. II: Syntax and Semantics', *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 39 (1982), cols. 26-38, esp. 31 (he suggests that yiqtol in a first postion functions as a jussive); Alviero Niccacci, 'A Neglected Point of Hebrew Syntax: Yiqtol and Position in the Sentence', *LASBF* 37 (1987), pp. 7-19; also Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose* (trans. W.G.E. Watson; JSOTSup, 86; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 75-81; E.J. Revell, 'The System of the Verb in Standard Biblical Prose', *HUCA* 60 (1989), pp. 1-37, esp. 14-21; Peter J. Gentry, 'The System of the Finite Verb in Classical Biblical Hebrew', *HS* 39 (1998), pp. 7-39, esp. 22-23, 35-39; Ahouva Shulman, 'The Function of the "Jussive" and "Indicative" Imperfective Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose', *ZAH* 13 (2000), pp. 168-80 (she proposes that in a clause-initial position the forms mentioned in the title indicate deontic and epistemic modality respectively, but in my opinion this classification is due to the traditional simplistic dual division of modality; her suggestion could be reformulated more accurately in terms of Functional Grammar as 'participant-oriented' and 'event-oriented' modality respectively; see Boland, *Aspect, Tense and Modality*, pp. 74-81); Robert David, 'L'analyse syntaxique, outil pour la traduction biblique: le cas des cohortatifs', in David and M. Jinbachian (eds.), *Traduire la Bible hébraïque: De la Septante à la Nouvelle Bible Segond* (Sciences bibliques, 15; cong.; Montreal: Médiaspaul, 2005), pp. 275-318 (with a differentiation of function according to the syntax).

evant is that in the instances in question a present time reference seems to be improbable.

Subsequently, all preformative forms of *hyh* were examined irrespective of their position in direct discourse. In my view, the clause-initial use of preformative *hyh* in statements such as 'My name will be there' (more literally: '[What] will be, [is] my name there'; 1 Kgs 8.29; 2 Kgs 23.27; cf. 2 Chron. 33.4) emphasizes the realization in the future of what is said and underlines in this way what is promised (cf. 2 Chron. 20.9: a similar phrase but there as a verbless clause). This suggests that the initial position only highlights a preformative verb form; the reason for this prominence is mostly a modal sense,[261] but sometimes it is a future sense that matters.

A problem with this finding is that it cannot be applied straightforwardly to Exod. 3.14 because in this case there is no overt subject and therefore a reference point is missing for locating the verb form.[262] As a consequence we have to look for a different point of departure. Another possibility is the study of the instances of *'ehye* that have in all probability a modal sense. They may occur (a) in a (relative) future time context, but also (b) in the context of a present time reference.[263] Let us consider more closely an example of the latter category (b), notably Ruth 2.13. In this verse Ruth says to Boaz: 'May I continue to find favour in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to the heart of your maidservant, although [lit., and] I might [?] not be (*lō' 'ehye*) as/equal to (*k*^{e}) one of your maidservants.' Ruth qualifies herself as a maidservant (*šipḥâ*); such a humble self-designation is not unusual in courteous language.[264] However, subsequently, in the last clause, she apparently reconsiders this self-designation. Most probably this clause is connected with

261. See Revell, 'System of the Verb', p. 21: 'Modal verbs, which present commands, requests, etc. are typically the most significant component of their clause, and so stand first in it.'

262. Contra Niccacci, 'Neglected Point', p. 19 note: 'I am convinced now that the first *'ehyeh* must be taken as jussive (cohortative), expressing a strong divine promise' (indicating with this a change of view in relation to Exod. 3.14a, cf. n. 229 above); David, 'Analyse syntaxique', pp. 315-17; Talstra, 'Text Grammar and Hebrew Bible', p. 31 (he suggests that a yiqtol in first position always has a jussive function, whether or not followed by a subject noun).

263. (a) Isa. 3.7 ('cannot be'); Job 3.16 ('would be'); 10.19 ('would be'; the last two instances also have a connotation of unreality); (b) Ps. 50.21 ('would be' in a dependent clause; reference point is the affirmative verb form *'āśîtā*, 'you have done'; cf., however, n. 235); Ruth 2.13 (see main text); Cant. 1.7 (used in a question relating to the present like those before).

264. Irene Lande, *Formelhafte Wendungen der Umgangssprache im Alten Testament* (diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1949), pp. 71-72; Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, IV (1999), s.v. *šipḥâ*, esp. pp. 1621-22.

her self-designation as foreigner in her previous utterance (in 2.10) and hints at her position as an outsider and therefore less than a 'maidservant' (cf. the response of the designated 'redeemer' in 4.6 in relation to Ruth). However, she does not say, 'although I am *actually* not (even) equal to one of your maidservants'; the preformative verb form indicates that the revised self-designation is not a straightforward description. Presumably, by speaking in this way Ruth indicates that this self-designation is what (socio-cultural) evidence imposes on her as what she should believe, leaving so her interlocutor room to think differently.[265,266,267] The sentence can first of all be considered as a supreme form of courtesy, but it is probably also not one devoid of astuteness: the suspicion that she is more to Boaz because of the generosity he has shown her.

Ruth 2.13 suggests that in the context of a present time reference a preformative form of *hyh* may not only have the function of a general present but also a modal function.[268] Of course, this is relevant for Exod. 3.14a: as already indicated, Exod. 3.13 asks for identification; then understanding the

265. For the relation between evidentiality and modality see Boland, *Aspect, Tense and Modality*, pp. 88-89.

266. Jack M. Sasson gives this translation of the last clause: 'Yet I am not even considered as one of your maidservants.' See Sasson, *Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2nd edn, 1989), p. 49. However, he does not substantiate the translation 'being considered as'. In this connection it is, however, noteworthy that the combination *hyh* + *k*^{e} + *'eḥad* + substantive can have an objective meaning (see Gen. 3.22; Judg. 16.7, 11) but also a more subjective meaning ('being considered/counted as') when the social situation of the subject is in view (Judg. 17.11; 2 Sam. 13.13). Because of the beginning of the statement of Ruth, this latter sense will also play a certain part in it. The distinction in question may also be drawn among other instances of *hyh* or verbless clauses with *k*^{e} (e.g. Amos 9.7). Cf. Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräische Präpositionen,* II. *Die Präposition Kaph* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), pp. 119-22 ('Rubrik 54: Beurteilung gemäss Anschein').

267. It is difficult for me to render the supposed meaning into good English. In Dutch the function of the preformative form of the last clause of Ruth 2.13 could be rendered with a modal adverb: 'hoewel ik *toch* niet een van jouw dienstmaagden ben.' Because most readers will not understand Dutch, a rendering in German is proposed here in addition: 'obwohl ich *doch* nicht *etwa* wie eine deiner Dienstmägde bin.' A freer alternative translation in English could be: 'although I am not as one of your maidservants, am I?'

268. To put this into perspective: in a narrative (= past time) context preformative forms of a verb *hyh* may have a frequentative-habitual function (see n. 255), a modal one (Num. 9.21; 1 Kgs 5.8/4.28[?]; 1 Chron. 9.24) or signal the relevancy of what is said to the reader, whether (e.g. Exod. 10.14) or not (Num. 9.15[?]) in the form of a comment. For the last function see Eep Talstra, 'Syntax and Composition: The Use of the *Yiqtol* in Narrative Sections in the Book of Exodus', in R. Roukema (ed.), *The Interpretation of Exodus* (FS. C. Houtman; CBET 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 225-36. Unclear: Exod. 36.29 (cf. 26.24; see the commentaries).

answer as relating to the present situation is most probable. From a macrosyntactical viewpoint a modal function is therefore a good possibility in the case of the *'ehye* of the main clause of Exod. 3.14a.

This does not say much about the second *'ehye*. It might be supposed that a preformative form in a headless *'ašer*-clause following the main clause has a modal function. An investigation of all these clauses did not confirm this idea: most of them have a future sense.[269] In fact, this should not come as a surprise: the majority of these clauses are equivalents of definite noun phrases. However, if only the idem per idem instances among them are considered, the picture changes. It is noteworthy that in nearly all cases with a headless *'ašer*-clause following the main clause (thus belonging to the paradigmatic cases of the posterior type) this *'ašer*-clause has a preformative verb form (this does not apply to 2 Sam. 15.20, with participle verb forms; we leave out of consideration Sir. 44.9 with the comparative particle *ka'ašer*). These preformative forms are likely to have a modal flavour. This is most obvious in 1 Sam. 23.13, where a narrative form (*wa*-preformative) is followed by a simple preformative form: 'they went-about wherever they *could* go-about.' This example also suggests that a certain difference in modality is possible between the two clauses of an idem per idem sentence. Note in this context also the coincidence in some idem per idem sentences of the use of an imperative in the main clause with that of a preformative form in the subordinate clause.[270]

This relation between modality and idem per idem sentences with an indefinite effect can be expected. Indefiniteness and modality are akin to each other. Modality concerns 'the speaker's non-indicative, evaluative judgement of the factual status of the action [or the predication] in the real [better: in a relevant] world.'[271] As for the indefiniteness of idem per idem

269. To mention here only instances of *yiqtol 'ašer yiqtol* and excluding idem per idem cases (Exod. 3.14a; Ezek. 12.25), with a future sense: Gen. 49.1; Exod. 6.1; 20.7 (= Deut. 5.11); Num. 24.14; 1 Kgs 18.12; Jer. 50.20; with a modal sense: 1 Sam. 16.3 (obviously the instruction given in the first person leads to an obligation in the second person; cf. also Exod. 4.12).

270. Posterior type: Exod. 4.13 (imperative + *nā'* in the main clause); 2 Kgs 8.1; Hos. 9.14; cf. anterior type: Exod. 16.23.

271. Thus Lénart de Regt, 'Hebrew Verb Forms in Prose and in Some Poetic and Prophetic Passages: Aspect, Sequentiality, Mood and Cognitive Proximity', *JNSL* 34 (2008), pp. 75-103, esp. 81. Cf. Jacob Hoftijzer, 'Zukunftsaussagen und Modalität', *Kusatu* 2 (2001), pp. 5-45, esp. 17 (modality presents the issue described, an act, process or state, as relating to a fact [*Tatsache*] or not). De Regt's view on the verbal system of Biblical Hebrew is very interesting (notably by suggesting a new dimension to it, that of cognitive proximity; cf. n. 268); but, unfortunately, as regards the present matter, he does not consider the position of a stative verb like *hyh*, as is already obvious from his

sentences, this has also to do with this subjective angle: it means that the speaker cannot be more specific or does not wish to be so.[272] Because of their affinity indefiniteness and modality support and intensify each other when the opportunity presents itself.

In conclusion, on a macrosyntactical level there seems to be no objection to a modal understanding of the statement in Exod. 3.14a. But we have to investigate this issue more closely within the given context.

f. *The Discourse Function of Exodus 3.14a*

The Statement of Exodus 3.14a as a Response. The statement of Exod. 3.14a is preceded by the question of Moses, which revolves around the expected request for a divine name by the Israelites (see sec. 3). However, in many interpretations the question how the divine statement relates to Moses' question is circumvented. In fact, the response nature of the statement of Exod. 3.14a is mostly denied by assuming that it consists of the explanation of the divine name and therefore only prepares a real answer (or, when taken in a source-critical account on its own, only implies this). However, given the uncertainty about the nature and the sense of the statement, the question what kind of response it is is a crucial one.

In dealing with this question, the results of the syntactical investigation of the divine statement (secs. 6a-6c) are taken for granted. It is therefore assumed that as an idem per idem instance it has a clear indefinite sense. To what, then, may the statement be the answer; in other words: what kind of a response may it be? The following possibilities can be distinguished:

(1) The statement refers the questioner to the future. As we have seen, if the statement is interpreted as relating to the future, it is mostly not understood in a really indefinite sense. Moreover, in the case of this interpretation, its relation to the question of Moses is usually also not considered. We therefore need to construct an interpretation that takes these things into account. The interpretation of the statement as 'I shall be whoever I shall be' can at best be conceived as implying 'You will see who I am—don't

definition of mood. The first addition to this definition intends to correct this shortcoming; the second rectifies another shortcoming: the failure to include fictional worlds. The latter correction follows a similar one by Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 147.

272. Dubarle, 'Signification du nom', 8; cf. the description of the function of idem per idem by Driver quoted above in this chapter, sec. 6c, the excursus in the first part, from *Notes on Samuel,* pp. 185-86.

worry, have confidence.'[273,274] It is presupposed then that the question of Moses should be connected with a need for certainty, and that the question is answered only on this (meta-)level. What also resounds in this answer in this context is what has already been said in 3.7-12, and therefore it is not interpreted in a completely non-specific sense. All this can be said in favour of this interpretation. However, to its detriment it has to be added that accordance to this understanding the response does not really take notice of what is asked. This applies to the request for the name as well as the underlying need of legitimization. With regard to the latter issue, the divine statement can be understood at most as an indication that this issue will be settled in the future.

(2) The statement implies a refusal to answer the request for the divine name. The statement is understood in the sense of 'I am whoever I am': 'What does it matter who I am.'[275] It is a very general answer implying that a divine name is not necessary for the execution of the mission by Moses or that the request for it is in any way inadequate. The answer is therefore understood as a disclaimer. The reason for this remains, however, unclear. As indicated (sec. 5a, at option II), it not probable that the request for the name implies a need for magical means to deal with the superior power of Egypt. Moreover, it is striking that the answers that are supposed to be similar (Gen. 32.30; Judg. 13.18) go in another direction: they seem to hint at God's special status (see sec. 2).[276] This interpretation also conflicts with the mention of a name in the third answer of God. This problem can be solved by attributing this answer to another source,[277] or by assuming that

273. Cf. Jacob, *Exodus*, p. 66 (German; cf. English p. 73): 'Beruhige dich, ich werde (in hilfreichen Machterweisen) sein, auftreten, als der ich sein und auftreten werde. . . . Es is eine *Lektion in Gottvertrauen* die Mose erhält.' Cf. also Cole, *Exodus*, 70: 'does it mean "I will only be understood by My own subsequent acts and words of revelation"? This would seem to fit the biblical pattern, for in all subsequent Israelite history God would be known as the One who brought Israel from Egypt (Ex. 20:2).'

274. Differently, Bartelmus, *HYH*, pp. 232-33 (*Textinterpretation*, pp. 397-98): he supposes that the statement indicates that the name to be given is meant to be without any meaning, only as a word to denote God, to prevent the impression that this will give power over him. The need for such a supposition, however, is not substantiated.

275. Thus Houtman, *Exodus,* I, p. 367; similarly Auerbach, *Moses*, p. 42: 'Wer auch immer ich bin, was geht's dich an?' (but only as surface meaning).

276. Houtman suggests, however, that the statement finally means: 'I am so great and so incomparable that what I am cannot be articulated in a single term; it cannot be expressed by a name (cf. Philo, *VM* [Mos.], I, 75).' See *Exodus,* I, p. 95 (sec. 7.3.2). This interpretation does not seem to me to be compatible with his basic interpretation of the statement (see at n. 275 above) and in any case to overcharge the statement.

277. See Caquot, 'Énigmes d'un hémistiche', pp. 24-25.

it concerns only a surrogate name.[278] The former solution should be only a means of last resort; the latter presupposes a level of sophistication not present elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

(3) The statement is an answer to the underlying problem of how the sending of Moses can be legitimized.

What matters in the preceding question of Exod. 3.13, according to the analysis given above (see sec. 5b), is the perspective of the Israelites. Because the Israelites have difficulty in reconciling the sending of a person to them with their image of the God of the ancestors, the issue is principally how this god may be, how he can manifest himself. The indefiniteness of God's being as suggested by the construction of Exod. 3.14a should therefore be related to the representations of the Israelites. In this context the statement of Exod. 3.14a should be understood in a certain modal sense: 'I may be who I may be.'[279] By means of Exod. 3.14a God indicates that he can be different from what he is thought to be on the basis of his earlier revelations. This implies that he may surprise in the way he manifests himself. It is in this manner that the statement meets the underlying problem of Moses' question and paves the way for his representation by Moses.

If the statement of Exod. 3.14a is understood in this third way, it can provisionally be characterized very generally as an 'intermediate answer.' In literature, an 'intermediate response' is generally understood quite formally as a response between a non-response and a direct answer.[280] By means of an intermediate answer, some aspect of the preceding question is clarified. If we interpret the statement in this way, the question remains whether such a response is unique or whether it can be supported by similar cases elsewhere.

The most similar case is probably found in Judges 13. As we saw (sec. 2), a part of the answer given in response to a similar request for the name reads: 'It is wonderful' (*pel'î*', v. 18). It does not say what the name is nor in fact what the nature of the name is but concerns, here too, the way

278. Cf. Philo (see Chapter 4 below, sec. 1); Caquot, 'Énigmes d'un hémistiche', p. 24 (speaking there about a pseudonym but strangely enough only in relation to *'ehye*, not in connection with Yhwh).

279. Cf. Propp, *Exodus*, p. 205: he suggests that this translation is attractive if evasion is intended. This rendering with a similar interpretation is also found in Auerbach, *Moses*, p. 42: 'Ich mag sein, wer ich sein mag!' (followed by the paraphrase noted in n. 275; cf. p. 36, with a rendering in the future tense). Note that with such a translation it is not necessary to add '-ever' to 'who' to catch the indefinite effect of the construction.

280. Parameswary Rasiah, *Evasion in Australian's Parliamentary Question Time: The Case of the Iraq War* (diss.; University of Western Australia, Perth, 2007) (found online), p. 66; Parameswary Rasiah, 'A Framework for the Systematic Analysis of Evasion in Parliamentary Discourse', *Journal of Pragmatics* 42 (2010), pp. 664-80, esp. 667, 669 (both writings with references).

God manifests himself. Thus there too the question is replied to on another, deeper level than that of the information asked for, and in this way it is met to a certain extent.

The Discourse Function of the Posterior Idem per Idem Type. Another way of clarifying the nature of the response is investigating more closely how idem per idem statements function on the discourse level. This will now be undertaken.

It has already often been noted that in statements of God about himself the idem per idem construction is used not only in Exod. 3.14a but also in Exod. 33.19 and Ezek. 12.25.[281] Moreover, this construction is also found in Exod. 4.13 and Hos. 9.14 as an exhortation to God by Moses and Hosea, respectively. It appears therefore that a significant proportion of instances of the posterior type is directly related to God (whereas this does not apply to the anterior type and the head noun group at all!). The question is, of course, why the divine has such an affinity for the idem per idem construction. We should proceed very cautiously here because, given the indefinite nature of the idem per idem construction, it is easy to fill the gap with something from our theological stock, for instance, something like freedom or authority.[282] We can better pose the question whether we should make such a difference between divine and human cases, even if we try to explain the affinity of the divine for this construction. To avoid such pitfalls, we should proceed in the matter as formally as possible.

In this respect the proposal that the idem per idem construction serves as a closure device is interesting.[283] The idem per idem sentences in Gen. 43.14 and Esth. 4.16 are quite rightly identified as examples of this way of functioning. This observation serves, however, as basis for the thesis that in argumentative discourse the construction may serve as a device for terminating a debate (notably by censoring the question implied).[284] Exodus 3.14

281. Mentioned as 'Selbstaussagen Gottes' by Vriezen, '*'Ehje 'ašer 'ehje*', p. 506 (referring to B. Hänel, 1929).

282. In relation to Exod. 3.14a, see, e.g., Irsigler, 'Von der Namensfrage', pp. 77-78; and Durham, *Exodus*, p. 38, respectively. See also Rochus Zuurmond, 'De machten', *Om het levende Woord* 7 (1997), pp. 28-36, esp. 33: he connects the indefiniteness of the statement with 'evading' (understand: not being subjected to) our criteria, and in this way with power. For a criticism of such views in relation to idem per idem sentences see B. Holwerda, *Historia Revelationis Veteris Testamenti* (Oudtestamentische voordrachten, 1; Kampen: Van den Berg, 1971), pp. 220-42, esp. 231-32, 236-39.

283. Jack R. Lundbom, 'God's Use of the *Idem per idem* to Terminate Debate', *HTR* 71 (1978), pp. 193-201.

284. Lundbom refers for such a censoring function to G. von Rad (orig. 1962). See Lundbom, '*Idem per idem*', p. 197. As will later appear, this function does not apply to the posterior type. It can, however, be related to the correlative instances mentioned

and 33.19 would illustrate this thesis, but not Ezek. 12.25; the construction there would be a matter of emphasis. The view in question is important because of its attention to the discourse level. However, it does not take into account the difference in sentence structure between Gen. 43.14 and Esth. 4.16 (anterior type) on the one hand and Exod. 3.14 and 33.19 (posterior type) on the other: the difference between them is seen as only a matter of discourse type. Moreover, the biblical examples mentioned of the latter kind are one-sided: they relate only to the divine. Finally, the background of the difference between Exod. 3.14 and 33.19 on the one hand and Ezek. 12.25 on the other does not get an explanation.

In my view, an investigation of the discourse function of idem per idem sentences should build on syntactical considerations. The question then is what the discourse level adds to the findings on the sentence level. Let us confine ourselves to instances of the posterior type. The best thing is to start from the effect characteristic of this type: indefiniteness. Since this indefiniteness concerns either the inability or the unwillingness of the speaker to be more precise, the indefiniteness affects the speaker, the listener or both of them. This suggests that the idem per idem instances involved can be distinguished according to their grammatical person.

To prevent drawing theological conclusions too quickly, let us start with the only human instance of the first-person cases: that means once again (see sec. 6c, second part) examining the effect that the idem per idem construction of 2 Sam. 15.20 has, but now discussing the relation with the context in much more detail. In the preceding verses it is described that King David has to flee from his rebellious son Absalom and that a group of Gittites wants to join him (vv. 14-18). David calls that intention into question in speaking to Ittai, apparently their leader (v. 19a). He calls him a foreigner and an exile, indicates that Ittai has only recently arrived, and that, as a consequence, he cannot stir him up to wander with him (vv. 19b-20a), adding to all this: 'as for me, I [am] going where I [am] going.' David refers therefore to Ittai's status as an outsider, possibly also hinting at the latter's newly acquired relative stability, before pointing, as a kind of (anti-) climax, to his own very uncertain fate, a destiny unknown to everybody, including himself. It is thus in this uncertain fate that the indefinite effect of the idem per idem construction gets shape (note also that this effect is shown here to be independent of the use of preformative verb forms since participles are used). In this way David tries to question the self-evidence

of the anterior type (Gen. 43.14; Esth. 4.16), provided that it is formulated with more subtlety. What Johnstone says in reference to Greek usage will also apply here: 'Locutions like this are dismissive. They discourage further discussion of some point.' See 'Pankoinon', p. 50.

of the thoughts and doings of Ittai (but, implicitly, also to test him, as will become clear afterwards).[285] The idem per idem sentence cannot express freedom or authority here, given the situation; neither does it terminate a debate because Ittai subsequently underlines his loyalty to David (v. 21).[286]

In the parts preceding the idem per idem sentences of Exod. 33.19 Moses has asked Yhwh for forgiveness from the apostasy of the Golden Calf by the people (32.12-13) and subsequently to grant his guiding presence to them again. The long-winded dialogue that follows later (33.12-23) makes clear that this is certainly not a matter of course. After Yhwh has finally indicated his willingness, Moses asks him to show his 'glory' (*kābôd,* 33.18). According to the way this term is used in Exodus, 'the glory is what can be seen of God's presence', such as a cloud or a devouring fire.[287] Within the particular context, Moses' request can be understood more precisely as one for an intimate encounter, something that would confirm Yhwh's willingness to restore his covenant with Israel (cf. 24.9-18).[288] God answers first of all (33.19): 'I will make all my goodness pass before your face and I will call out the name Yhwh before your face and I shall be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and shall show compassion with whom I will show compassion.' In this way God redirects Moses' question before replying to it in the next verses (vv. 20-23).[289] Instead of immediately speaking about what is asked, by specifying the conditions of a visible manifestation, he expresses his readiness to manifest his goodness, and therefore focuses on what kind of god he is. In this attempt to reorientate Moses, the idem per idem sentences play a crucial part. In itself their indefiniteness could be heard as arbitrariness, but this would not be in line with the goodness just mentioned. The sentences should be heard against the background of the repeated words that Moses has found grace in the eyes of Yhwh (vv. 12, 17b), and of the latter's statement that he will therefore grant Moses' request (v. 17a). The idem per idem sentences make explicit the implications of God's promise in the given situation. They underline the surprising nature of Yhwh's acting: he is willing to be gracious and compassionate, although the opposite could be expected. The fact that these sentences are tied to his name indicates that they do not

285. See also Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry,* I. *King David* (SSN, 20; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), pp. 179-83, esp. 180: 'The continuity of past and present, self-evident to the men of Gath, is contested by David.'

286. For the latter argument contra Lundbom, see Ogden, 'Idem per idem', p. 118.

287. Donald E. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 232-33.

288. Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40* (HThKAT; Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2004), p. 347.

289. Fretheim, *Exodus*, p. 299; and Holwerda, *Historia revelationis*, p. 237, respectively.

concern something accidental. All this prepares well the actual realization of the theophany inasmuch as the abundance of God's grace is emphasized there, in contrast with the limitedness of his anger about sins (34.6-7).

The situation in Ezek. 12.25a is different. The Israelites doubt whether the words of the prophet(s) will ever be realized (v. 22). The words of the prophet try to counter that way of thinking. He says among other things: 'I [am] Yhwh, I shall speak what[ever] I will speak (as word [*dābār*]) and it will be done' (v. 25a). The noun *dābār* has been placed afterwards, probably because it then has more prominence.[290] It has presumably been added because of the meaning of the verb *dbr*, which indicates only the activity of speaking without referring to its content.[291] In itself the relative clause would therefore refer only to the stream of words. The addition of the noun, however, not only makes clear that the content too is in view, but also prepares the transition to 'it will be done.' For in this way the idem per idem construction is integrated into the collocation 'to do (*'śh*) a word / thing spoken about (*dābār*)' (cf. 12.25b, 28; 33.32). The use of the idem per idem construction itself adds strongly to the fundamental nature of the whole statement.[292] The prophet indicates that not only a certain word will be fulfilled but any (prophetic) word, no matter what that may be. The meaning is therefore an underlining of what has already been said before (cf. vv. 23-24; see also v. 28). The statement also has an authoritative connotation, but this is only due to the initial words, 'I [am] Yhwh', and the close connection made between what is said and what then will happen.

In conclusion, it appears that the rhetorical situation of the idem per idem sentences of 2 Sam. 15.20 and Exod. 33.19 is different from that of Ezek. 12.25 by being not subordinated to another turn of phrase. As for the idem per idem sentence of Exod. 3.14, this is most comparable to the former ones:

- All three idem per idem sentences constitute an argument by themselves (it is already in this aspect in which Ezek. 12.25a differs).
- The idem per idem sentences in 2 Sam. 15.20 and Exod. 33.19 concern the final arguments in a series, whereas the one in Exod. 3.14a forms

290. About other instances in which the head noun, the 'governing substantive', is shifted to a position after the relative clause, see, e.g., G.A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951 [orig. 1936]), p. 137. Amos 5.1 would be most similar.

291. Samuel A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (VTSup, 46; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 141-61, esp. 144.

292. Karin Schöpflin speaks of a 'Grundsatzaussage'. See *Theologie als Biographie im Ezechielbuch: Ein Beitrag zur Konzeption alttestamentlicher Prophetie* (FAT, 36; orig. Habil.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), p. 258.

the only argument; but in all these cases they constitute the decisive argument.

- Most importantly, these idem per idem sentences counter the existing way of thinking in a radical way.

Speaking of a 'device' is probably saying too much, given the small number of examples, but nevertheless they form a certain tendency that should be taken into account, if only for lack of other evidence. The findings argue against ideas at the beginning of this text part about the more general function of the idem per idem construction. They undermine the interpretation of Exod. 3.14a in the sense of authority or freedom by calling attention to the discourse function of idem per idem sentences. In all the cases concerned, there is a tension between the answer and the question involved, but the answer does not censor this question but rather redirects it. Therefore it does not serve as a (debate) closure device; it aims rather at reorientating the addressee.

The only third-person example of the posterior idem per idem type, the one describing David's wandering because of Saul (1 Sam. 23.13), does not show this discourse tendency. In the second-person instances, the reorientating function may be present but is less obvious. This applies to Elisha's advice in view of an imminent famine (2 Kgs 8.1). Another dubious case is the idem per idem sentence found in the book of Hosea. To the preceding threatening words of Yhwh, the prophet Hosea adds the comment: 'Give them, O Yhwh, what you may give them. Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts' (9.14). In this translation *mâ* is taken as an indefinite relative pronoun (cf. other translations that understand it as a direct interrogative, which results, however, in a defective preceding clause, without an object, because there has been no prior talk of giving something and therefore no object is implied).[293] In the context the preformative verb form in the relative clause has in all probability a modal quality and notably that of ability. In his prayer the prophet (a) may encourage Yhwh in his threat by stressing the childlessness announced (see v. 12a); (b) may just ask to

293. Cf. Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, sec. 144 fa: Judg. 9.48; 1 Sam. 20.4; 2 Sam. 21.4 (however, in these cases *mâ* is found in sentence initial position). For other instances, see *DCH,* V, s.v. *mâ,* sec. 8, pp. 159-60. Comparative evidence can also be adduced. First, there is the cognate word *mî*, which is definitely used as a relative pronoun in the middle of a sentence; see *DCH*, s.v. *mî*, sec. 5, p. 243 (most examples occur after an epistemic verb, but see Josh. 24.15; 1 Sam. 17.56). Moreover, in numerous other languages the same word functions both as interrogative and relative pronoun. The background is a similarity in function between relative and indirect interrogative clauses. See Lehmann, *Relativsatz*, pp. 325-29.

execute only what is the least worst under the circumstances (cf. Job 3.11-16), or (c) adjure Yhwh to keep the punishment in his own hand hoping for compassion in the end (cf. 2 Sam. 24.11-14).[294] Presumably, the prophet expresses himself at first quite indefinitely, out of politeness, giving God a free hand, but subsequently draws attention to something more specific (therefore option b or c). This supposition is inspired by the instance of Exod. 4.13, in which the indefinite meaning of the sentence and the definite intention of the speaker are even more closely intertwined. This case, however, will be discussed in the next part.

Exodus 3.14a as Part of the Dialogue between Moses and Yhwh. Before summarizing the findings in relation to Exod. 3.14a in the next section, let us examine the divine statement as a response in comparison with other question–response sequences in the call narrative. What should referred to first, is the relationship with the other, more direct answers to the request for the name in v. 13, namely, the responses in Exod. 3.14b and 3.15a. Because the statement of v. 14a is more or less resumed in these responses, the statement also functions as an 'intermediate response' in another, chronological sense, as a first response on the way from the question to the final answer.

As for the other responses of Yhwh in relation to the preceding expressions of reserve by Moses, let us start with a survey. In Exod. 3.11 Moses expresses his unfitness for the mission in quite general terms by a rhetorical question. Yhwh responds by promising his assistance and meets Moses' underlying uncertainty by giving a sign signifying his involvement in Moses' mission (see Chapter 1). In 4.1 Moses firmly denies that the people will believe him and listen to him, in contrast to what Yhwh has said before (3.18). Subsequently he is granted three signs as evidence of his meeting of Yhwh. In 4.10 Moses objects by pointing to his lack of eloquence. Yhwh responds by referring to himself as creator of and lord over the communicative faculties of human beings and by promising his assistance in speaking.

Moses' expressions of reserve against his sending (the so-called objections) have each a very different nature. Nevertheless, there is some logic in their order.[295] It is striking that the first two of Moses' objections are questions (the first having, however, a rhetorical nature); the following two are firm denials (the latter of them switching subsequently to a positive description of the problem). What is more, the chiastic pattern A B B' A'

294. See for (a) Jacob, 'Osée', p. 71; for (b) Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea* (trans. G. Stansell; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 166-67.

295. Differently, Childs, *Exodus*, p. 71: 'The progression of the dialogue is more visceral than logical.' Similarly Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), p. 149.

can be detected in the first four objections,[296] in which A' and B' represent a more explicit and specific form of the general objections A and B, Moses' unfitness and the difficulties of his acknowledgment by the people, respectively. The pattern in Yhwh's responses is more complex. The promise of assistance in 3.12 is mirrored by a more specific one in 4.12. The visionary sign of 3.12 gets a certain echo in the three miraculous signs in 4.2-9. What is particularly relevant to us in the context of the statement of Exod. 3.14a is that Moses' objection in 4.10 is also not immediately followed by a response of Yhwh that deals with his problem but rather by a reference to who he, Yhwh, is. This suggests that the order of responding in 3.14-15, first a fundamental positioning by Yhwh before dealing specifically with the question, is not so peculiar. Moreover, in the previous part about the function of idem per idem we have also met a similar situation in Exod. 33.19-23.

We still have to investigate the last expression of reserve by Moses about his sending, found in Exod. 4.13: 'For my part (*bî*), Lord, send, please (*šᵉlaḥ-nā'*), by the hand (*bᵉ-yad*) you may send (*tišlāḥ*).' With the modal particle *nā'* speakers mark an imperative clause as only a proposal.[297] It is a mitigating device for which in the case of Exod. 4.13 the scene is set by the particle *bî*, which, if it is more than a formal indication of humility, expresses premably something like this: 'as for me / for my part, but—and that is only implied—this does not need to be your opinion.'[298] A much freer rendering of the imperative and *nā'* would be by a modal question: 'Could you send

296. Thus Houtman, *Exodus,* I, pp. 324-25.

297. See Bent Christiansen, 'A Linguistic Analysis of the Biblical Hebrew particle *nā'*: A Test Case', *VT* 59 (2009), pp. 379-93: he suggests that *nā'* functions in general as a propositive/exhortative particle. Marco Di Giulio sees *nā'* as one of the means to attenuate a conversational move (e.g. a request in Exod. 4.13). See Di Giulio, 'Mitigating Devices in Biblical Hebrew', *Kusatu* 8-9 (2008), pp. 33-62, esp. 50-52. Ernst Jenni considers it, more specifically, as taking into account the resistance that the addressee of the request may offer. See the summary of his previous findings in Jenni, 'Erwägungen zur Etymologie der althebräischen Modalpartikel *nā'*', *TZ* 65 (2009) special issue (FS. M.A. Schmidt), pp. 18-27, esp. 20-21. For the 'adversativen Modalpartikel *nâ'* he suggests *doch* as the German translation. For Exod. 4.13 this would result in the following rendering: 'Schick doch, durch wen du schicken magst' (thus, already much earlier, Buber and Rosenzweig, *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung*). The word 'doch' (like Dutch 'toch') brings some hesitation in the sentence, and as such it can be an adequate translation in German; but as an interpretation of the sense of *nā'* it seems to be determined too much by this translation possibility in German.

298. The particle is mostly more or less closely connected with it supposed origin, a full sentence in the sense of 'On me be the blame of the issue I will raise' (cf. 1 Sam. 25.24; 2 Sam. 14.9). Thus, e.g., Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräische Präposition,* I. *Die Präposition Beth* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), sec. II.A.1.e, p. 44 (with references); cf. Di Giulio, 'Mitigating Devices', pp. 45-46 ('Pardon, excuse me'). However, it is difficult to

. . . ?' The prepositional phrase (*b*^{e}*-yad*) has the nature of a fixed phrase with the (very general) meaning of 'through the agency of'.[299] It is immediately followed by a finite verb, therefore, without a relative particle.[300] The phrase serves to indicate that the sending concerns a person (and not a message). The general sense of Moses' request is not immediately clear. Sometimes it is interpreted as a request for aid (a), but then the word *yad* is taken in isolation from the phrase in which it occurs. More often it is interpreted as a request to send someone else (b).[301] But how such an interpretation can be inferred from the wording of Moses' objection is not made clear.

It should be noted that Moses' last expression of reserve falls outside the range of the other objections (therefore should be marked as C). The nature of Moses' objection is quite different from the others in that it does not point out a specific difficulty connected with the execution of the mission; apparently this is no longer an issue. The objection concerns now God's initiative.[302] Moses expresses specifically a request concerning the one who has to execute of the mission. Because of its indefiniteness, the idem per idem statement may in principle concern anyone, including Moses himself.[303] It is not so strange to think of this possibility, because some form of acceptance could be expected at this point in the dialogue (cf. Isa. 6.8: 'Here [am] I, send me').

However, the context seems to point in another direction. Not without reason it is said that Moses attempts to reopen the dialogue by his remark.[304] Prior to this, the dialogue between Yhwh and Moses has been closed by the repetition of Yhwh's command ('Go!', 4.12; cf. 3.10, 16) and his promise of assistance in an adapted form. Nevertheless, such a reopening of the dialogue had already occurred a little before by Moses' objection in

see how this simple particle (lit. 'in [relation to] me') can carry the weight of that sense. Cf. also Christiansen, 'Linguistic Analysis', p. 390: 'an honorific.'

299. P. Ackroyd, s.v. *yād, TDOT,* V, p. 410.

300. Also elsewhere finite verbs are used as a noun. See Daniel Grossberg, 'Nominalization in Biblical Hebrew', *HS* 20-21 (1979-80), pp. 29-33, esp. 31-32.

301. See (a) Brian Britt, *Rewriting Moses: The Narrative Eclipse of the Text* (JSOTSup, 402; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 122, 123; (b) e.g. Childs, *Exodus, p.* 79: 'O, my Lord, please send somebody else.'

302. Jürgen Kegler also notes the crucial role of this C-element; however, he sees it as akin to the A-elements. See Kegler, 'Die Berufung des Mose als Befreier Israels: Zur Einheitlichkeit des Berufungsberichts in Exodus 3-4', in C. Hardmeier, R. Kessler and A. Ruwe (eds.), *Freiheit und Recht* (Festschrift F. Crüsemann; Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), pp. 162-88, esp. 180-84. Interestingly, Kegler also recognizes the pattern A B B' A' C in the order of the five visions in Amos (p. 181 note).

303. After Houtman, *Exodus,* I, p. 413.

304. Contrary to Lundbom's view on the function of idem per idem. Thus, rightly, Britt, *Rewriting Moses*, p. 121.

4.10 and even more clearly by his objection in 4.1: although Yhwh had previously said 'Go!' (3.16) and had given him detailed information about what will happen and what he has to do, Moses vehemently objects. The oddity of Moses' request in 4.13 is that it suggests that nobody has been sent up to now. Therefore he puts his own being sent in brackets. Moreover, in the given context the request does not remain as general as it may seem. After the statements of Yhwh in 4.11-12, the preformative form in Moses' request most probably refers to Yhwh's ability (also in this respect comparable to Hos. 9.14). The last part of the sentence could therefore also be translated as follows: 'send, please, the one you *can* send' (cf. the LXX, which expresses the sense concerned more explicitly by the rendering 'designate *a capable other*'; see also Chapter 4, sec. 2b); in the context the sentence goes implicitly beyond the indication that Moses is not the right person for the job (see 3.11; 4.10) by suggesting that Yhwh had better send another.

However, in the context of the dialogue of the call narrative, Moses' request seems also to have another, deeper meaning. The construction of this request is obviously similar to that of the statement in Exod. 3.14a, but now with the verb 'send', which was in fact at stake there. In his request to God, Moses takes up therefore God's fundamental statement of Exod. 3.14a but gives it a twist by using its phrasing and more particularly its indefiniteness to his own advantage. If this interpretation is right, Exod. 4.13 may be considered the oldest commentary on Exod. 3.14. As such, this would corroborate the modal idem per idem interpretation of this statement given above (see the first part of this subsection) as well as its interpretation as an effort to reorientate the interlocutor.

In relation to Moses' objection, Yhwh responds by becoming angry (4.14); his patience is obviously exhausted. Nevertheless, he adds Aaron to the mission and repeats his promise of 4.12 in this context (4.15). In fact, Yhwh grants Moses' request to a certain extent, but on his conditions. In this way Moses gets a taste of his own medicine.

7. *Final Considerations*

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, Exod. 3.14a received a lot of attention in the past. People, in particular theologians, found there a fundamental statement about what and who God is. Before drawing conclusions, it is appropriate to put this interest in this text into perspective: the name Yhwh not only derives its meaning and significance from this text but gets its content from other biblical texts also. For example, the introductory statement to the Decalogue, 'I [am] Yhwh, your god, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of serfs' (Exod. 20.2), is no less

important in this respect. In the end, the question should therefore be more what the text of Exod. 3.14a adds to the other biblical texts. However, this question goes beyond the scope of this chapter and should be treated within the framework of biblical theology.

After this preliminary remark, let me now draw conclusions from the previous sections and push them a little further:

(1) The nature, meaning and function of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a are not evident in themselves, a fact witnessed by its numerous and various interpretations; every interpretation of this statement has therefore to be a methodological ('hermeneutical') exercise, certainly if one wants to really advance the matter. Let me, in this connection, start by making explicit the method that was followed in the previous sections.

(a) Certain rules were followed in the main part of the chapter to avoid too much speculation: the focus was on the existing text and how this text has been organized:

- The point of departure was the text as it stands. My view is that the present text as such deserves attention. This view is also based on scepticism about the evidence put forward by attempts to reconstruct the genesis of texts such as that of Exod. 3.13-15 (see sec. 1).
- This methodical respect for the present text is also exemplified in the investigation of the way in which the divine names are used in the call narrative. It is further illustrated in the importance attributed to the connection between the question expected from the Israelites in 3.13 and the question from the Hebrew brother in 2.14. Moreover, it appears in reading Exodus 3 against the background of (the present text of) Genesis.
- With reference to the organization of the text, the direction of the discourse was taken into account (the principle of narrative linearity). Exodus 3.14a was read after Exod. 3.13 and not as a sequel to 3.15 (the actual naming of God). Nobody can know before reading the last verse or v. 14b that the statement of 14a is an explanation of a name. Therefore this statement should first of all be understood against the background of the preceding verses. The fact that this statement is distinguished from the other answers by speech introductions also argues for the importance of this position.
- The interpretation of the sentence of 3.14a started from the immediate context, and after this the circle was drawn more widely. All our hypotheses (possibly inferred from other, following texts) should be confronted with the immediately preceding context and then examined to see whether the interpretation still stands. Such an approach may pre-

vent the particularity of a certain text being explained away by means of other texts (e.g. Exod. 20.2).[305]

- The interpretation tried to respect the segmentation of the discourse and notably the various communicative levels in Moses' question in 3.13. In general, it may be expected that a question such as that of 3.13 is answered on the same level as it has been put. This position can be based on the usual identification of a reader with the major characters and their issues in a narrative.

(b) Moreover, in the preceding sections the attempt was made to map all the factors that may influence the interpretation by a 'native reader', someone competent in the language and with knowledge of the culture concerned.[306] The different existing interpretations were, in fact, only considered inasmuch as they could guide us to the determining factors of such an interpretation. Let us now consider the different kinds of determining factors:

- Grammar and syntax may tell us a lot about how a certain (function) word or a sentence should be interpreted. This matter received ample attention, concerning Exod. 3.14a in particular in the last main section (sec. 6). The large number of interpretations of Exod. 3.14a has partially to do with grammatical and syntactical uncertainties and obscuri-

305. This bottom-up approach differs substantially from the cumulative reading by Wardlaw. The difference in results is correspondingly. In his view the meaning of the title *ʾelōhîm* is first of all determined by Gen. 1.1–2.3 and in agreement with that use connected in the call narrative with his function as sovereign creator. See for this Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God",* pp. 239-43. To me it is impossible to see the link with creation. The association with sovereignity seems to occur, but only in 2.23-25. See my remarks about it in sec. 4a above. Generally speaking, Wardlaw's aim seems to be a *positive* assessment of the meaning of each of the divine names, whereas my interest concerns primarily the significance of their interchange. If one distinguishes between different communicative levels in the call narrative, *ʾelōhîm* appears to function there first of all as the *not-yet* counterpart of Yhwh.

306. This concept is borrowed from S.R. Slings; see Slings, 'Figures of Speech and Their Lookalikes: Two Further Exercises in the Pragmatics of the Greek Sentence', in E.J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts* (Mnemosyne Sup., 171; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 169-214, esp. 172. Slings prefers this concept over that of 'interpretive community' (Stanley E. Fish) and defines it there as 'a native speaker whose stylistic feeling has been conditioned by a good knowledge of his own literature'. For the concept Slings refers rather vaguely to 'Austin'. Presumably, this reference is from (inaccurate) memory and concerns in reality the work of two followers of J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle, namely Robert L. Brown and Martin Steinmann, 'Native Readers of Fiction: A Speech-Act and Genre-Rule Approach to Defining Literature', in P. Hernadi (ed.), *What Is Literature?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 141-60. They suggest that the ability of a 'native reader' to recognize literature, notably fiction, is based on certain inferences.

ties. The previous section had to deal even with the basics of Hebrew grammar and syntax such as the function of the preformative conjugation, of the verb *hyh*, and of the relative particle *ʾašer*. Hopefully, this investigation has contributed to the clarification of such questions. Another cause of the many interpretations is that the divine statement is itself indefinite and can therefore be connected with the context in many ways. In our final interpretation of the statement we should take into account not only all the determining factors but also this lack of determination.

- Discourse patterns (or sometimes deviations from these) are also relevant. The preceding sections paid attention to the occurrence of patterns, as suggested by corresponding cases such as different possibilities of question-answer sequences, the discourse function of an idem per idem construction, the function of multiple speech introductions, the way names are explained, the connection of a particular divine name with a particular revelation, and the link between some words or motives and prophecy. It also included discussion of the logic of legitimization, as always referring to something known.

(2) The immediate context of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a is constituted by the preceding question of Moses and the following two divine answers. The statement of 3.14a should be interpreted against this background. The starting point for the investigation of the divine statement, therefore, has to be an investigation of Moses' question in 3.13. According to the findings, this question can be clarified as follows:

(a) According to its formulation the question of Moses is a request for information: the name to be spoken at best or otherwise what else should be responded to in relation to the request that he expects to be raised by the Israelites (sec. 3).

(b) The request for the name is in all probability related to the 'sending' of Moses. The verb 'send' is used in what raises the request, Moses' imagined self-introduction to the Israelites ('The God of your fathers has sent me to you'). Moreover, it is also this verb that is subsequently employed in the second and third divine answers, with the divine names Ehyeh and Yhwh as subject (sec. 4d, first paragraph).

(c) The crucial question is why exactly the divine name is asked for under the circumstances. This question is answered in different ways by different exegetes (sec. 5a). In the biblical context, a few options are most likely:

- The context of the previous verse (v. 12) with its reference to serving God in the future suggests that the need for a name in worship plays a certain part (see also the use of *zēker*, 'memorability-title', in v. 15b) although this does not suffice as a complete explanation.

- Within the unfolding story of the book of Exodus the request for the name does not appear out of the blue but has been prepared by the question of the Hebrew 'brother' of Moses in 2.14 who authorized him to make his intervention (sec. 5b, first part). This question serves as a contextual clue to what is at stake in the request of the Israelites in 3.13: the legitimacy of Moses. The controversies of Moses with the people later described in the Pentateuch and the well-known discussions in relation to the prophets about whether or not they are sent by Yhwh also indicate that such an issue would not be an isolated one and therefore they support this interpretation.
- The request for the name presupposes most probably the idea that a new divine revelation requires a new divine name. This idea constitutes a biblical tradition particularly manifest in Genesis (sec. 4c). This tradition explains why the request for a divine name is put forward as self-evident in the call narrative.
- Against the background of the Genesis narratives Moses' question implies more specifically this problem of legitimacy: how can he, Moses, claim to be sent by the ancestral god with a message to the Israelites when this god has never previously done such a thing (sec. 5b, last part)? Before Moses nobody was ever sent by God with a message to other people because to the ancestors God manifested himself only in direct appearances.

(d) It should be emphasized that the answer to what is at stake in Moses' question cannot be determined by us modern readers completely apart from the answers given by God (in spite of what has been said in conclusion 1.a above). That is already clear from remark 2.b: the supposition on the basis of the structure of Moses' question that the request for the name is tied to Moses' sending is confirmed by God's actual answers.

(e) It should also be stressed that if the problem of legitimacy is at the heart of Moses' question, then this question cannot simply be answered by means of a vocable. This is also suggested by the quite general, desperate nature of Moses' question (sec. 5b, at the end).

(3) The meaning of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a itself as it would have been intended by the author was reconstructed in the previous sections.[307] The findings can be summarized as follows:

307. The notion of author's intention does not refer to an access to the spirit behind the text by a magic click but should only be taken in the sense of 'a Regulative Principle for correct interpretation', which pushes us to take into account the particularity of a text in its linguistic and historical context. See Noble, *Canonical Approach*, pp. 197-99.

(a) As an idem per idem sentence of the posterior type with only *'ašer* as clause connector, the divine statement has an indefinite sense (sec. 6c). This also implies that the use of the same word *'ehye* as in the promise made earlier (3.12) does not say much since it is now employed in a different context.

(b) This response obviously means a displacement in relation to the information-seeking question of Moses (cf. sec. 1), a shift from the issue of the divine name to that of who God is. In these circumstances, one conclusion seems to be quite natural: this answer redefines the issue, at least the most crucial issue in question, in one way or another.

(c) The answer means not only a change in the matter discussed but also in the point of view from which it is discussed. The question of Moses speaks about God in the third person ('has sent', 'his name'). The speaking in the first person introduces a new perspective, the perspective of the one who is speaking, that is, God's perspective. Taken together, the two aspects of the answer strongly suggest that the answer has a reorientating nature (see further point 3.f).

(d) The decisive question is to what exactly is the divine statement a response, a question that is hardly ever posed in exegesis. The answer to this problem should first of all account for the reason why there is any shift from the question to the response. The immediate cause of the displacement is most likely to be found in Moses' self-introduction to the Israelites, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you', which is also a statement about God. However, it is not immediately evident how this self-introduction by itself could elicit the divine statement. The solution to this problem may be found on the level of the presuppositions of the Israelites that have lead to the request for the name, which are related to this self-introduction, the immediate cause of their request.

(e) According to the analysis given, the statement is a comment on the problem underlying Moses' question about how the God of the ancestors can send someone to other people although he never before did such a thing (see conclusion 2.c above, last remark). According to this analysis, the statement is therefore an answer to the presupposition that sending is an act that does not fit the ancestral god (a presupposition on the level of encyclopaedic information). God's statement clarifies what kind of god he is: by means of the idem per idem construction he points to his otherness, indicates through the indefiniteness and the potentiated modality (sec. 6e, last part) of the statement that he exceeds the representations of Moses and the Israelites (sec. 6f, first part). It is in this way that God is founding the new act of sending Moses.

(f) The reorientating function of the divine statement can also be observed in other idem per idem sentences of the posterior type (besides 2 Sam. 15.20 see esp. Exod. 33.19; see sec. 6f, middle part). This also applies to other responses in the call narrative (esp. 3.12 and 4.11; sec. 6f,

last part) and the responses to the requests for the name in other theophanies (Gen. 32.30 and Judg. 13.17; sec. 2). Together with these responses the statement of Exod. 3.14a can therefore tentatively be subsumed under the category of 'reorientating response'.[308] In this connection it should, however, be realized that these responses have a different nature: in the cases of Gen. 32.30 and Judg. 13.17, that of a reply by means of a suggestive counter-question; in the statement of Exod. 3.14a, that of an answer in the form of a suggestive positive indication. In fact, only a further study of question–response pairs in the Hebrew Bible and related texts can make clear what the relevance of the 'reorientating response' category proposed here is.[309]

(4) It could be asked whether a reader could ever arrive at the conclusion just mentioned. That is why, once again, attention will be paid to the divine statement but now from a reader's perspective. The process of understanding the statement by a native reader can be outlined as follows:

(a) Against the background of Moses' immediate question, what he should say in answer to the request for a divine name, the reader will first draw some negative conclusions. Because of the *'ašer*-clause the divine statement cannot be a straightforward answer to the request for a name by revealing such a name. Nor will it, because of its first-person form, give a direct answer to Moses' question of how to deal with this request.

(b) The enigmatic nature of the response then becomes evident.[310] This nature is based on the discrepancy of the answer with the question on the

308. This type of answer seems to be most comparable to 'transformative answers' described in linguistic literature. See Tanya Stivers and Makoto Hayashi, 'Transformative Answers: One Way to Resist a Question's Constraints', *Language in Society* 39 (2010), pp. 1-25.

309. Cf. Kenneth M. Craig, *Asking for Rhetoric: The Hebrew Bible's Protean Interrogative* (BibIntS, 73; Boston: E.J. Brill, 2005). In my view this study is in this respect only a beginning; what is wanted is a more systematic investigation of the different, formal properties of question–answer pairs.

310. See Zuurmond, 'De machten', p. 33, where he characterizes the divine answer as an 'enigmatic saying' (*raadselspreuk*). According to Zuurmond, it expresses on the one hand that God 'evades' our criteria; on the other, that he will be effectively present. See also Noth, *2. Mose*, p. 30: he speaks of a 'geheimnisvollen Satz', presumably not only meaning by this that the sentence is mysterious to us, but also that it is intended as such (see p. 31). See further Paul Ricoeur, 'Exodus 3:14—From Interpretation to Translation', in Ricoeur and A. LaCocque, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* (trans. D. Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 331-61, esp. 340: 'Who can say whether in the ears of the ancient Hebrews [it] did not already have an enigmatic resonance?' According to the French text, the last clause would read more exactly: '[it] did not already resonate as an enigma?'

one hand and on the indefiniteness of the answer on the other. The reader, therefore, does not at first know how to interpret the statement.

It may be observed that the enigmatic nature of the divine response is in fact prepared by the way in which God appears to Moses at the beginning of the call narrative. The enigmatic nature of what Moses sees is indicated by paradoxical statements: the bush 'is burning' but 'is not consumed' (3.2); in radical contrast on the level of words it is even said subsequently that it 'does not burn', that is, it does not burn down (3.3).

It is, however, typical of an enigmatic utterance such as that of Exod. 3.14a to cause the reader to look for a hidden meaning.[311] In fact, the whole history of reception testifies to this effect of the divine answer![312] It generates again and again new interpretations. The question may be posed whether the interpretation proposed here is only one of many in a series, or whether it means a rupture with common approaches. This question will be dealt with later (see point 9.b below).

(c) In my view, the search for a suitable interpretation of the divine statement will go on until the reader realizes that this statement meets what underlies the request for a divine name, the problem that, unprecedented in the time of the ancestors, God is sending someone to other people.

The change of perspective is caused not only by the fact that the interpretation of the statement remains unsatisfactory as long as it is interpreted in line with the request for a divine name or in line with Moses' direct question about what he should say to the Israelites. Then it would be only an accidental occurrence. There are also factors on the discourse level that promote such a change of perspective. What should first be mentioned is the relationship of God's response to Moses' first expression of reserve in the immediate context (3.11-12). This response does not concern a direct answer but a reorientating comment on the preceding rhetorical question (see Chapter 1, sec. 4). As such it supports an understanding of Exod. 3.14a in a similar sense. The influence of v. 12, therefore, goes much further than what is often discussed in the commentaries, the use of the same verb form *'ehye* (see sec. 6e, first part).

311. A reader may expect that an answer is relevant. This is in agreement with the 'maxim of relation', one of the maxims particularizing the 'cooperative principle'. See H.P. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in P. Cole and J.L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, III. *Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 41-58, esp. 45-47, 51.

312. See Walter Brueggemann, 'Exodus 3: Summons to Holy Transformation', in Fowl, *Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (see n. 150 above), pp. 155-71, esp. 164. He connects the 'elusive quality' of the statement with 'the richness of the scholarly debate over what it means'. Similarly Schniedewind, 'Calling God Names', p. 82.

What is even more important is the usual discourse function of the posterior idem per idem type (see sec. 6f, middle part) and the nature of the answer to be expected to the request for the name of the other in a theophany narrative according to Genesis 32 and Judges 13 (see sec. 2). In both cases the statement of the speaker counters underlying ideas of the interlocutors and tries to redirect their thinking. In particular, in these theophany narratives the answers of the heavenly being go beyond the representations of the addressees and intend to disrupt their way of thinking in order to make clear his extraordinary status. The statement of Exod. 3.14a can be easily understood in the same way.

(5) The other two divine answers may confirm (or deny) the interpretation given. About the other answers and the relationship between the different answers, the following conclusions can be drawn:

(a) Preceding '[he] has sent me to you', the word *'ehye* obviously functions clearly as a name. It is therefore to be understood as an answer to the request for the divine name that Moses expects will be made by the Israelites. The connection with this question is more easily made by the resumption of his direct question 'What shall I say?' in the message commission formula: 'Thus shall you say. . . .'

Ehyeh is a newly formed name. As such it requires some explanation, as name-giving elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible shows.[313] In the context, Ehyeh functions therefore as a summary of the preceding statement of 3.14a with its double *'ehye*. As a consequence, the name-giving can be understood in accordance with the pattern that a happening leads to a certain name (see sec. 1).

From the statement of Exod. 3.14a the name gets an indefinite sense. (This transfer of meaning is facilitated by the fact that Ehyeh itself is not followed by a noun phrase but a verb.) On the other hand, in connection with 'has sent me to you', the word Ehyeh also gets a positive sense.[314] In this way the possibly rather weak, not quite evident relation of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a with a presence that manifests itself is affirmed. Therefore, not only the first divine answer acts on the way the second answer, in particular the name Ehyeh, is understood, but the second answer also influences more or less the understanding of the first answer. The consequence of the resumption by the name Ehyeh is that the first answer gets its

313. Anderson notes that 'in many languages the content of a name is regularly salient at nomination . . . and may remain so' (that is, on occasion). See Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 100; cf. 103, 107-108.

314. Cf. Schonevelt, 'Nieuwe vertaling van Exodus 3:14', p. 94: he, like others, adduces this as an argument against the interpretation of Exod. 3.14a as a refusal. In my view, the situation is much more complicated.

definitive function as explaining and founding the new appearance of God to Moses. Moreover, by the second answer the first finally also functions as the explanation of a name, that is, a description of the meaning of the name (this function is mostly noticed by exegetes, but it is usually attributed to it from the beginning, therefore too soon). In this respect it also prepares for the introduction of the old divine name Yhwh in the third answer.

Against the background of Moses' question in v. 13 and also the divine statement in 14a the new name obviously gets a legitimizing function. As intended to be spoken by Moses, the first-person divine name form Ehyeh testifies pre-eminently that he, as a prophet, speaks in the name of Yhwh.

(b) After a repetition of the message commission formula, an answer follows (3.15) that is strongly similar to the second one. The only difference is a royal five-part name at the beginning and the declaration subsequently that this is the name to be used (*zēker*; see sec. 4d, last part). The first and most important part of this 'great name' is the personal name Yhwh. In the follow-up of Ehyeh, it starts to sound like the human counterpart of this newly revealed name. The consequence is that the meaning of Yhwh is reassessed. As a third-person form it becomes reminiscent of the first-person form and thus of the primacy of who God is by himself over what is known about him.

(c) We are now (cf. sec. 1) better equipped to take a closer look at the function of the speech introductions: 'God said to Moses' (3.14a); 'And he said' (3.14b); and 'God said further to Moses' (3.15). The first answer is addressed 'to Moses'. There is no need to think that it is exclusively meant for Moses, if only because the intended readers, the Israelites, are also allowed to know this answer. The connection by *'ehye* with the second answer also suggests that the first answer was addressed not only to Moses. This is further evident from the fact that 'to Moses' is repeated in the speech introduction to the third answer, which is like the second one explicitly addressed through Moses to the Israelites. The immediate occurrence of the first answer after the speech introduction, without any transition as in the next answers, is well suited to the fact that this answer, as a comment on the preceding question, interrupts the continuity of the storyline. At the same time this comment paves the way for a more direct answer, the second one. The simple speech introduction to the second answer also suggests an intimate connection with the first (cf. the transition between 3.11 and 12). In fact, the divine statement of v. 14a gives shape to only one of the ways the divine designation of v. 14b could be interpreted when considered on its own.

The speech introduction of the third and final answer is marked by *'ôd*, an unusual word in a speech introduction (see also Exod. 4.6). Whereas in general it indicates the repetition or continuation of an act ('still', 'further'), here the particle is presumably also connected with the contents of what is

said.[315] If that is right, then the following speech is presented expressly as an addition to the previous words (*'ôd* as 'furthermore', 'moreover').

In sum, it appears that the speech introductions have an important function. As said earlier (sec. 1), it is impossible to read the three answers immediately one after another. The speech introductions distinguish and connect the answers by organizing them as different moments in one discourse. They allow, therefore, a coherent reading.

(6) According to the reading given, the divine name Yhwh is not introduced as a new name, hitherto unknown, but is reintroduced as the divine name to be used par excellence. There are several arguments for such a reading. First of all, the name is not introduced in an identifying proposition such as 'I am Yhwh'; 'Yhwh is the name of the god that has sent me'; but Yhwh is mentioned in one and the same breath as 'the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. As the text stands, it is most natural to assume that Yhwh was already the name by which the ancestors knew their god.[316] What, however, is of overriding significance in this connection is that it is also the most natural reading according to the present text of Genesis and Exodus: after frequent use in the first parts of Genesis, this divine name is nearly absent from its last part, and completely lacking in the first chapters of Exodus. Instead other divine names were used. In fact, in Exodus 3 the name Yhwh is not mentioned simply as a divine name but proclaimed as the divine name forever (see v. 15b). In the context this implies that the priority of Yhwh among the divine names is established. However, this is only a side issue of the text.

The main issue in the text is not the identification of Yhwh with the 'God of the Fathers', as is often thought. The main issue is how the sending of Moses to other people can be reconciled with what is known about this god. In agreement with this, the name Yhwh is not simply reintroduced, but, as noted above, its meaning is redefined by means of the name form Ehyeh and the preceding divine statement. When everything is considered, the introduction of the divine name Yhwh in the dialogue may be qualified as a kind of a literary construction with a theological point. The explanation of the name makes clear that the liberation of Israel from Egypt has first of all the nature of a prophetic intervention (cf. Hos. 12.14: 'By a prophet

315. See Wolfgang Richter, 'Zum syntaktischen Gebrauch von Substantiven im Althebraischen am Beispiel von *'ōd*', *ZAH* 7 (1992), pp. 175-95, esp. 179; and Jacob, *Exodus*, 74 (however, not rendered well; see German, p. 67), respectively.

316. Thus Cassuto, *Exodus*, pp. 39-40. Comparably M.-J. Lagrange, 'El et Iahvé', *RB* 12 (1903), pp. 362-86, esp. 380, also referring to the designation 'Yhwh, the God of your fathers' in Deut. 1.21; 6.3; 27.3. Cf., however, sec. 5a above, at background A.2.

Yhwh brought Israel up from Egypt') and that this is connected with the very nature of Yhwh.

(7) On the basis of what has been said, the statement of Exod. 3.14a could also be approached from a religion-sociological point of view. Let me give an indication of such an approach. Prophets are persons who speak the truth, say unexpected things; they are therefore people who go against the current. Since prophets are considered to be messengers of God, in the divine statement this prophetic quality is traced back to a quality of God himself.

(8) Let us now look at the position of Exod. 3.13-15 within the whole narrative of 2.23–4.17. In the previous chapter (Chapter 1, sec. 5), it has already been noted that these verses fall outside the call pattern. However, they connect with the uncertainty suggested there (sec. 4) about the source of the appearance also manifest in other call narratives, something that is even rather typical of the larger group of theophany narratives. In fact, the verses underline the finding of the first chapter about the constitutive nature and wide-ranging scope of the call narrative of Exodus 3-4 (see Chapter 1, sec. 5, last part). The narrative depicts Moses as the archetypal prophet, the one who paves the way for all the saviours and prophets after him, but at the same time points to him as the one who will establish the fundamental institutions of Israel. Exodus 3.13-15 joins the constitutive nature of the narrative by founding the call, the act of commissioning, in the nature of God himself.

(9) The interpretation of Exod. 3.14a preferred in this chapter can now be confronted with other interpretations:

(a) Let me start with a preliminary remark. The interpretation of Exod. 3.14 is clearly not simply a matter of technical difficulties. In the preceding text time and again we came across the role that preconceived ideas play in the way we usually approach the text. In this connection the grammaticalization of the relationship between the name forms Ehyeh and Yhwh should be mentioned, one that finally results in a technical understanding of the occurrence of the name form Ehyeh in the message of v. 14b (see n. 95). Another example is the too quick identification of the divine statement of v. 14a as an explanation of the sense of the divine name, something that prevents us from investigating it as an answer to the question of v. 13 (see secs. 1; 6f, first part). The fact that only rarely if ever connection is made between the would-be question of the Israelites and the question of the Hebrew man in 2.14 also deserves attention in this context (sec. 5b). Even if we have to do with different sources, this does not preclude a connection: Exod. 3.13-15 may consciously be constructed against the background of 2.14 or it may intentionally be put in this context. In any case

it matters that in the present text of Exodus the question of 2.14 gets a continuation in 3.13. In sum, it appears that in history exegesis passed some points by which we are inclined to follow a certain track, limiting in this way our scope in relation to the text. The history of reception and the role of presuppositions deserve therefore more attention in the debate about the interpretation of Exod. 3.14a.

(b) As already indicated (see point 1.b above), the differences in interpretation have to do to a large extent with grammatical uncertainties in relation to Exod. 3.14a. However, in this connection, presuppositions also seem to exert influence on the interpretation. What is most striking is that the majority of exegetes recognize the idem per idem nature of the sentence construction of Exod. 3.14a but at the same time usually consider its indefinite effect to be problematic. This reveals itself in a specification of the complement in spite of this recognition (e.g. as related to being with people as in Exod. 3.12),[317] the allegation that the stress is on the verb of the main clause and not on the subordinate clause (and in connection with this idea the assurance that the indefiniteness concerns only how God is there, not whether he is there),[318] and also the interpretation of the sentence as emphatic.[319] It may finally be asked whether this embarrassment with the indefinite effect was not also a major reason to look for other interpretations of the syntax of Exod. 3.14a.[320] The reason for all these escape attempts is presumably that exegetes could not link the indefiniteness with the context of salvation or with the mention of a divine name afterwards. And last but not least

317. See the references in n. 240.

318. For the last remark, see, e.g., Jacob, *Exodus,* pp. 72 (first paragraph), 73 (third paragraph) (however, the translation of the first passage is terrible; see the German edition, pp. 65, 66); cf. Holwerda, *Historia revelationis*, p. 239. Syntactically speaking, such authors conceive the relative clause as a non-restrictive, appositive clause. An extreme version of this view is found in Motyer, *Revelation of the Divine Name*, p. 23: the relative clause of 14a adds nothing, otherwise it could not be abbreviated to 'I will be' in 14b.

319. See Kilwing, 'Syntax von Ex 3,14', pp. 75-77. He lists the syntactic differences between Gen. 43.14 and Esth. 4.16 on the one hand and Exod. 3.14a on the other but, nevertheless, conceives the sense effect of the idem per idem construction of Exod. 3.14a in the same way as those in the two former verses only on the ground that all three verbs used in them would be marked by some degree of 'Rektionslosigkeit' (relative in the former cases, absolute in the latter one).

320. Strikingly enough, Schild, e.g., discusses the syntax of Exod. 3.14a as an identification by a congruent relative clause in detail but rejects the idem per idem interpretation only because it would amount to a 'noncommittal/evasive circular definition', and therefore the defence of his own view is located on another level than his rejection of other views—a categorical inconsistency in his approach. See Schild, 'On Exodus iii 14', pp. 300-301 and 297, respectively.

they could not reconcile it with their conception of God.[321] If it is realized that this indefiniteness has to do with the nature of prophecy (cf. esp. Ezek. 12.25!), then it will probably be more acceptable.

(c) What are the advantages of the interpretation preferred in this chapter in relation to other interpretations? The next arguments may be mentioned in favour of this position:

- The interpretation given of the idem per idem construction of Exod. 3.14a is based on a careful investigation of the syntax of all other instances of this construction. Moreover, it is completely in agreement with the same construction in 4.13, which in all probability intends to connect with the former (see sec. 6f, last part).
- It pays much attention to an issue that has been insufficiently considered up to now, the question as to what issue exactly the divine statement is a response and what the relationship is between Moses' question and God's answer. The order of God's three answers is understood as analogous to that of Moses' question: it deals first with what can be said about God, then with the issue of his name.
- The interpretation given of the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a respects fully its indefinite and enigmatic nature. It does not reduce the answer because of its indefiniteness to an indirect refusal of the request for the divine name. Like many other interpretations, it does not assume that this answer says nothing at all. However, different from them, it does not seek the positive dimension beyond this indefiniteness but precisely in it: it considers this indefiniteness a reorientating force that fits the immediate context, the question of Moses, pre-eminently.
- The basic components of the interpretation preferred, the reorientating effect of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14 and the intrinsic relation of the proclamation of the divine name with the sending of Moses, are shown to have support in several ways.
- According to the interpretation given, Moses' question and God's three answers are understood as an organic part of what is essentially a 'sending' narrative. Therefore they are not, as is usually done, taken as a digression within the story, as a deviation from the storyline, for which there is actually no clear evidence in the text.

Of course, the question remains whether the interpretation preferred here describes and explains the issues of the text adequately or misses certain points. In this respect the readers should judge for themselves! In my view,

321. Cf. Fretheim, *Exodus*, p. 63: 'Israel need not be concerned about divine arbitrariness or capriciousness' (although this remark is not explicitly directed against the idem per idem conception, its presence has presumably this background).

the main question is whether the interpretation involved is not based on secondary features of the text. However, in this connection it should also be realized that every investigation of the divine statement runs this risk since its nature, meaning and function are not immediately obvious and can therefore only be based on inference.

(10) Let us finally consider the role these verses play in the larger context of Exodus and the Hebrew Bible. It is often supposed that they find a direct echo elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. This issue will be dealt with in the next chapter. However, apart from this question something can be said about the more global function of Exod. 3.13-15.

(a) The narrative of the call of Moses functions, together with God's fundamental readdressing things in the discourse of Exod. 6.2-8, as a pivotal connection between Genesis and Exodus. In both of these chapters the promise to the ancestors is connected with the exodus from Egypt. And in both a crucial role is played by the divine names, and the actual priority of the name Yhwh is emphasized. However, there is a significant difference. In ch. 6 Yhwh is contrasted only with El Shadday as fulfilment versus promise. El Shadday is connected with the making of the covenant with the ancestors: Yhwh with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, the adoption of Israel as his people, and the gift of the promised land (6.6-7).[322] In the preceding ch. 3, another face of God is introduced, one that mediates between Yhwh- *ʾelōhîm* as the god of the ancestral narratives, a god of direct revelation, and Yhwh as the god of the exodus of Israel from Egypt (cf. 3.7-8; also Exod. 20.2; Ezek. 20.5; Hos. 12.10). The sending of Moses to the Israelites and with it his prophetic office are connected with a new name, Ehyeh, which is put forward as the very heart of the divine name. It is within this perspective that the priority of its human counterpart, 'Yhwh', over all other divine names is founded. Seen in this way, the order of Exodus 3 and Exodus 6 is an example of a frequent compositional phenomenon: with similar texts, the more fundamental text often precedes the less fundamental one (cf., e.g., Genesis 1 and 2). It might even be supposed that Exodus 6 was written before ch. 3, but that will probably be difficult to prove with certainty.[323]

(b) There are four passages in Exodus in which the divine name is proclaimed and explained in one way or another: 3.14-15; 6.3; 33.19; and 34.5-7. Among these explanations, that of Exod. 3.14 is etymological; the others only connect the divine name with a certain action or quality. The similarity of the idem per idem sentences of Exod. 33.19 with that of Exod. 3.14 is

322. Thus, rightly, Childs, *Exodus*, p. 115.

323. See the literature mentioned in n. 79 of Chapter 1.

striking and may be intended.[324] All these passages play a part within key narratives of Exodus, and each of them is related to a time of crisis: the narrative of the call of Moses is related to the desperate situation of Israel under the servitude in Egypt; the fundamental divine discourse in ch. 6, to the worsening of the labour conditions as the result of Moses' request to Pharaoh for a leave; and the intercession of Moses and the following theophany to the apostasy of the Israelites and therefore to their breach of covenant. In all these contexts of crisis a central question is who and how God is, and therefore the verses related to the divine name play a pivotal part within these narratives.

(c) The call narrative of Exodus 3-4 introduces Moses as a mediator between God and the people. As such, this sets the scene, quite exceptionally, for four biblical books. As already indicated, other texts also link Moses to prophecy. However, by its position at the beginning of the Moses story and by its foundational nature, the call narrative functions—together with its worthy ending in Deut. 34.10—as a major 'canon builder', linking the first two main parts of the Hebrew Bible, the Torah of Moses and the Prophets, in a fundamental way.[325] In this respect, Exod. 3.13-15 has a crucial function inasmuch as it suggests that the god of Moses is intrinsically the god of the prophets.

324. Cf. Plastaras, *God of Exodus*, p. 243: '[It] is really a paraphrase of the explanation of the divine name which was given in Exodus 3:14.' This remark suggests a certain historical relationship between the two verses, which may be, however, the reverse. In *Theology in Exodus*, p. 234, Gowan says, perhaps more discretely, that 33.19 'echoes' 3.14a. For a more comprehensive discussion of the relationship, see Polak, 'Theophany and Mediator', pp. 144-46.

325. Cf. Dominik Markl, 'Ex 3f und Dtn 1,1; 34,10-12 als literarische Eckpunkte des pentateuchischen Mosebildes', in Markl, S. Paganini and C. Paganini (eds.), *'Führe mein Volk heraus': Zur innerbiblischen Rezeption der Exodusthematik* (Festschrift G. Fischer; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2004), pp. 15-23.

3

The Withdrawal of God Himself: Hosea 1.9 as the Invalidation of Exodus 3.14 and Other Interpretations

Hosea receives the order from God to start a relationship with a 'woman of whoredom' (*'ēšet z^{e}nûnîm*). This serves as a symbolic representation of the fact that Israel has left Yhwh and has 'whored' with other people (Hos. 1.2). The names of the children born from this relationship stand for the consequences of this fact. The third and last child is called Lo-Ammi. Most contemporary exegetes render the explanation of this name as follows: 'for you are not my people (*lō'-'ammî*) and I am not your *'Ehye* / I am your *Lō'-'Ehye*' (1.9). If the explanation is translated in this way, *'ehye* is supposed to be an allusion to the alternative, if not most proper, divine name Ehyeh in Exod. 3.14.[1] Understood in this way, the verse gets a tremendous theological impact: Yhwh would break off the relation that he started with Israel

1. More or less thorough in this sense: A. van Hoonacker, *Les douze petits prophètes* (EtB; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1908), p. 19; C. van Gelderen, *Het boek Hosea* (COT; Kampen: Kok, 1953), pp. 33-34; Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea* (Hermeneia; orig. German, 2nd edn, 1965 [1st edn, 1957-61]; trans. G. Stansell; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), pp. 21-22; George A.F. Knight, *Hosea: God's Love* (TB; London: SCM, 1960), p. 47; A. Deissler, 'Osée', in L. Pirot and A. Clamer (eds.), *La Sainte Bible*, VIII/1. *Les petits prophètes* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1961), p. 38; C. van Leeuwen, *Hosea* (POT; Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1968), pp. 42-43; James Luther Mays, *Hosea* (OTL; London: SCM, 1969), pp. 29-30; Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 197-99; Harald Schweizer, *Biblische Texte verstehen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986), pp. 135; cf. 152-53 (speaks of 'Anklänge an Ex. 3,14'); Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), pp. 33-34; Douglass Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), p. 33 (he conceives *'hyh* as causative); Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets,* I. *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 22. Earlier this view had already been briefly articulated by W. R[obertson] Smith, 'On the Name Jehovah (Jahve) and the Doctrine of Exodus 3:14', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 25 (1876), pp. 153-65, esp. 165; A.B. Ehrlich, *Mikrâ ki-Pheschutô*, I (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1899), p. 138 (cf. the reference of Carl S. Ehrlich, 'The Text of Hosea 1:9',

in Egypt; salvation history is rolled back, as it were. Moreover, and in the context of the present book quite interesting, the verse would then also be one of the oldest commentaries on Exod. 3.14, if not the oldest one. What is affirmed there in the explanation of the divine name, would be denied here. This would argue for an understanding of this much-debated explanation in the sense of a promise of the commitment of God with Israel for the future.[2]

In this chapter the rightness of this view of Hos. 1.9 will be investigated. First this is done by examining the arguments in favour of it and the logic behind it, then by studying other interpretations of this verse, and finally by making a comparison with the names of the other children and the explanation of these names in Hosea 1.[3]

1. *(Lo-)Ehyeh as a Divine Name*

The view that Hos. 1.9 is an allusion to the name Ehyeh may be substantiated in several ways. Some arguments are mentioned by adherents of this view; others may be supposed as motivations behind their support. They will now be discussed in a systematic way.

(1) It has been stated that the literal translation of the last clause of Hos. 1.9 is: 'I am not I am to you', and that it sounds therefore awkward.[4] Such a sentence sounds indeed strange; however, although the rendering sticks rather closely to the wording of the source text, it also differs clearly from this text by adding 'am' for a second time as the verb form and by doubling the personal pronoun (not to speak about the tense form). In any case, the oddity observed has nothing to do with the source text. The order of personal pronoun, negative particle and verb is not unusual (in connection with the verb *hyh,* see also Gen. 42.31; Num. 27.3; Ezek. 11.11; Amos 7.6; Ruth 2.13), and this also applies to the sequence of the latter part of the clause, that of *hyh*-verb, preposition and personal pronoun, as will be shown in the third section of this chapter.

(2) The book of Exodus precedes that of Hosea in the Bible, and its contents are situated prior in time. That is why a biblical reader is easily

JBL 104 [1985], pp. 13-19, esp. 16 note); Ehrlich, *Mikrâ ki-Pheschutô*, III (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1901), p. 361.

2. Thus, e.g., Werner H. Schmidt, *Exodus*, I (BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), p. 177.

3. The first version of this chapter appeared as 'De Godsnaam in Hosea 1:9—een commentaar op Exodus 3:14b?', *ACEBT* 17 (1999), pp. 75-88. It has been rearranged somewhat (esp. the material now present in sec. 4) and further revised and enlarged at many points.

4. Thus Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, I, p. 22.

tempted to understand Hos. 1.9 as an allusion to Exod. 3.14. However, the question may be raised whether this is not in fact a reader's illusion.

From other parts of Hosea it is obvious that the author of this biblical book knew certain traditions of the book of Exodus (see esp. Hosea 9-13). On the other hand, in these parts there are no clear indications that he knew the narrative of the call of Moses, nor, in particular, the verses concerning the divine name (Exod. 3.13-15).[5] Only if it could be proved that *'ehye* is a name in Hos. 1.9 would it be probable that this text is dependent on Exod. 3.14. The reverse, a dependence of Exod. 3.14 on Hos. 1.9, is less probable, for a negative statement presupposes in principle an affirmative one.[6] The two verses are also not dependent on a third text, because there are no clear indications that *'ehye* functions elsewhere as a name.[7] In any case, it may now be clear that the supposition that *'ehye* is a name in Hos. 1.9 referring to Exod. 3.14 cannot be based on the order of the books involved in the Hebrew Bible but only on the particularities of the text and context of Hos. 1.9.

(3) The view in question is thought to have ancient documentary support. In the traditional Hebrew, Masoretic text a hyphen, a *maqqef*, is found between *lō'* and *'ehye*, and this would indicate that these elements are to be understood as one word.[8] In fact, the *maqqef* concerns the level of intonation, not that of syntax; these two levels should not be confused.[9] It should

5. Contra [Robertson] Smith, 'On the Name Jehovah', p. 165: according to him, Hos. 12.6 'plainly quotes' (!) Exod. 3.15b; but this view cannot stand, because it concerns a liturgical phrase—see Ps. 135.13; cf. Ps. 102.13. Cf. also Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 635: the form *'ĕhî* of 13.7, 10, 14 may be a pun on the divine name *'ehye*. This idea is more elaborated for 13.10, 14 by Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redaction Critical Investigation* (SBLDiss, 102; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 255-58: she understands *'hy/'ĕhî* as an interrogatory particle with the meaning 'where', as well as an allusion to the name Ehyeh, therefore conceiving the sentences involved at the same time as questions and—by way of subtext—as statements. Grammatically speaking, *'ĕhî* in 13.7 makes perfect sense as a variant of *'ehye*; consequently, there is no need to understand it as an allusion to Exod. 3.14. And although the use of *'hy/'ĕhî* causes difficulty in 13.10, 14, it seems unlikely to me that the type of sentence could be completely different depending on whether the sentence is understood on the surface level or as an understatement.

6. Contra Anthony and Lucy Phillips, 'The Origin of "I Am" in Exodus 3.14', *JSOT*, 78 (1998), pp. 81-84.

7. See below, sec. 5, point 2.

8. Thus Knight, *Hosea*, 47; Wolff, *Hosea*, 21; van Leeuwen, *Hosea*, 42; Stuart, *Hosea–Jona*, 33; cf. Ehrlich, 'Hos. 1:9', 17.

9. The Masoretic system of accents, of which the *maqqef* is a part, is primarily prosodic and not syntactic by nature. See Bezalel Elan Dresher, 'The Prosodic Basis of the Tiberian Hebrew System of Accents', *Language* (Journal of the Linguistic Society of America) 70 (1994), pp. 1-52.

be taken into account too that two-thirds of the about 230 biblical passages with *lō'* and a verb form of *hyh* are found with a *maqqef*! Moreover, a *maqqef* is not used in obvious proper names in the same chapter of Hosea 1: 'Lo Ruhamah' (the name of the second child) and 'Lo Ammi' (that of the third child). Why it is not used there remains a question. It might suggest a certain emphasis on the *lō'*-part of these names.

Some particularities of the Septuagint translation would also argue in favour of the view in question. It is often stated that in Greek minuscule manuscripts, written basically in small letters, *eimi* occurs with a capital in Hos. 1.9.[10] However, an exact reference is missing and in all probability does not exist at all.[11] A more serious argument is that, as in Exod. 3.14, the present tense is used in Hos. 1.9 (*eimi*) and not the future tense.[12] However, although the translation of a Hebrew preformative verb form with a future tense in Greek is usual, there are exceptions. Harmonization with the previous clause is presumably the most important motive in such cases (cf. Hos. 8.6 with the third-person form *estin*). Also, the use of the negation in the text could have facilitated the translation in the present tense, because a negation

10. To my knowledge, this has been done for the first time by Wolff, *Hosea*, 21-22 note; he has been followed by Deissler, 'Osée', p. 38; van Leeuwen, *Hosea*, p. 42; Charles D. Isbell, 'The Divine Name *'ehye* as a Symbol of Presence in Israelite Tradition', *HAR* 2 (1978), pp. 101-18, esp. 105; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, p. 33; and further by Norbert Kilwing, 'Noch einmal zur Syntax von Ex 3,14', *BN* 10 (1979), pp. 70-79, esp. 79 note.

11. The Göttingen LXX edition of Hosea does use a capital letter, but references to manuscripts with this feature are missing. See Joseph Ziegler, *Duodecim prophetae* (Septuaginta, 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943), p. 148. At my request for more information to the Septuaginta-Unternehmen of the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen in the context of previous version of this chapter (see n. 3 above), Dr Udo Quast kindly reported to me (letter of 1 February 1999) that there is no capital letter in the following manuscripts used by Ziegler: 22, 26, 36, 46, 48, 49, 51, 62, 68, 87, 91, 130, 147, 233, 239, 311, 407, 410, 490, 534, 538, 613, 763, 764 (86, 106 and 719 could not be checked because copies were not available at that moment). It is also noteworthy that the older editions of the Septuagint by H.B. Swete (1912) and A. Rahlfs (1935) use a small letter for *eimi*. The edition of Ziegler seems therefore to have misled Wolff as representing directly the minuscule manuscripts! Wilhelm Rudolph has already stated that the opinion of Wolff is erroneous. See Rudolph, *Hosea* (KAT; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1966), p. 38.

As a consequence, the use of a capital by Ziegler has to considered an interpretation. In this, he follows probably Peter Katz in his review of '*Septuaginta* . . . [ed. Alfred Rahlfs, 1935]', *TLZ* 61 (1936), cols. 266-87, esp. 286. Katz infers the necessity of writing a capital by supposing that the LXX renders faithfully the parallelism attributed to the Hebrew text (see point 5 in the main text).

12. Jan Joosten, 'Exegesis in the Septuagint Version of Hosea', in J.C. de Moor (ed.), *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (OTS, 40; cong.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 62-85, esp. 80 (but admits that 'it is a tenuous indication').

concerning the future may in fact be operative from the moment of speaking (cf. a translation of the negated verb form with either 'I *shall* not be' or one with 'I *am* no longer').[13] It should finally be noted in this connection that, from another point of view, the use of the verb form *eimi* may even constitute a counter-argument. In the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch, the name Ehyeh in Exod. 3.14b is rendered as *ho ōn* ('the one being'), therefore not as *eimi*.[14] If then the supposition is true that the translator of Hosea knew the older Pentateuchal translation, but not its Hebrew source text,[15] the use of *eimi* cannot suggest a link with Exod. 3.14.

Another argument from the Greek translation would be the use of the genitive *hymōn*, 'yours', in the translation of Hos. 1.9.[16] The translation by a dative, *hymin*, 'to you', would be more literal, whereas *hymōn* would naturally be understood as a genitive connected with a noun—as such *eimi* would function here. This argument does not really hold: the use of the genitive of a personal pronoun as predicate is a good possibility in Greek.[17] Presumably, a genitive suggests a more intimate connection than a dative.[18] In the few instances in the Septuagint known to me, it indicates attachment rather than possession.[19]

13. See Anssi Voitila, *Présent et imparfait de l'indicatif dans le Pentateuque grec: Une étude sur la syntaxe de traduction* (SESJ, 79; orig. diss.; Helsinki: Société d'Exégèse de Finlande; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), pp. 51 ('Parfois l'ind.prés. apparaît comme un équivalent du yiqtol dans des connections où il est difficile de discerner *la limite entre le présent et l'avenir*'), 53-54 (about negative forms). According to my findings in Hosea, there are several irregularities in the translation of negated preformative forms (e.g. 5.13; 9.2-4); most related are 4.14 (*suniōn*, present active participle) and 5.4 (*edōkan*, aorist, with an impact on the present).

14. See Chapter 4.

15. In this sense at least Armand Kaminka, 'Studien zur Septuaginta an der Hand der zwölf kleinen Prophetenbücher', *MGWJ* 72 (1928), pp. 49-60, 242-73, esp. 242.

16. Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 21 note; Rudolph, *Hosea*, p. 38 (but he doubts that the Hebrew text has already intended this); Ehrlich, 'Hos. 1:9', p. 17 (similarly).

17. In (later) Koine the genitive, besides other means, increasingly substitutes for the dative. See G. Horrocks, 'Syntax: From Classical Greek to the Koine', in A.-F. Christidis (ed.), *A History of Ancient Greek: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 618-31, esp. 628-29.

18. In the view of Émile Benveniste (1966), *eimi* with the genitive expresses '*belonging to* (*appartenance*) as the predicate of some definite object [here the people] determined as *his* or *mine*; whereas the dative construction expresses possession from the point of view of the person who does or does not possess something. Hence . . . the dative construction takes a (syntactically) indefinite object.' Thus (including italics) according to Charles H. Kahn, *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek* Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2nd edn, 2003), p. 169.

19. See 2 Sam. 20.11; Isa. 44.5; Jer. 5.10. Concerning the rest of the instances mentioned in sec. 3, most are translated by a dative, some by a possessive personal pronoun (e.g. Josh. 5.13; Ps. 119/118.94) or in a more peculiar way.

(4) The sequence of *lo'* and *'ehye* can easily be understood as a name in line with the two preceding negative names Lo-Ruhamah (1.6) and Lo-Ammi (1.9a).[20] The probability of this understanding is also supported by the fact that the second element of Lo-Ruhamah is a verb form, the afformative pual-form of *rḥm*: 'she has (not) been pitied.' In this connection, it can also be noted that the series of names argues for taking *lō'* and *'ehye* in Hos. 1.9 as one word: *Lō'-'Ehye*. Seen in this way, this verse would refer only implicitly to the name in Exod. 3.14.

It is important to observe that this argument argues in favour of understanding *(Lō'-)'Ehye* as a name in Hos. 1.9 but that in itself it does not constitute sufficient evidence for this view; it is not plausible that only on this contextual basis would a negated verb form be understood as a name.

(5) Only reading *'ehye* as (part of a) name makes it possible to understand both clauses of the explanation of the name *Lo-Ammi* as a real case of parallelism (and therefore as a usual form of poetic emphasis in the Hebrew Bible).[21] The addition *lā-kem*, 'to/for you', to Ehyeh is generally understood parallel with the personal suffix *-î*, 'my', in *'ammî*; the argument is in this connection that a personal suffix cannot be applied to a proper name, and that therefore *'ehye* has been linked to *lā-kem*.[22] Seen in this way, the parallelism would be an example of syntactic parallelism.

This argument is not as obvious as proposed in many commentaries. Note first of all that the parallelism with *Lo-Ammi* could even argue for conceiving *lā-kem* as part of the proper name, but that would be a very unusual name. What is more, the commentators apparently consider a strict formal understanding of parallelism as self-evident, but in fact there exists considerable variation in this phenomenon.[23] It is noteworthy that the second of the two clauses of the two other name explanations in the Hosea 1 are much shorter than the first ones (the latter count seven units of writing, the former only four; see Hos. 1.4 and 1.6). If in these cases we nevertheless would like to stick to the idea of parallelism, we have to change our view of it. It has recently been argued that the real basis of Hebrew parallelism

20. Matthew W. Mitchell, 'Hosea 1-2 and the Search for Unity', *JSOT* 29 (2004), pp. 115-27, esp. 121.

21. Cf. van Hoonacker, *Petits prophètes*, p. 19; van Gelderen, *Hosea*, pp. 33-34; Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 21; Deissler, 'Osée', p. 38; van Leeuwen, *Hosea*, p. 42; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 197; Jeremias, *Hosea*, p. 33; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, p. 33. Ehrlich, 'Hos. 1:9', p. 17, notes critically in connection with this supposed parallelism that *'ehye* is a proper name; but, by contrast, *'am* is a generic name.

22. Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 21; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 198.

23. See James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 2-7.

is prosody, in which two or three prosodic ('stress') word units in one line are followed by the same number in another.[24] In this connection it may be noted that each of the clauses of the first two name explanations in Hosea 1 counts three prosodic word units. But let us confine ourselves to v. 9. As the previous paragraph already suggested, each clause concerns there two word units: *'attem. . . lō'-'ammî | wᵉ'ānōkî . . . lō'-'ehye-lākem*. Therefore, their parallelism is not a matter of syntax but of prosody.

The discussion of the arguments for the view that *(lō'-)'ehye* is a name shows that they are not strong. Consequently, there is every reason to pay attention to other views.

2. *Another Original Text?*

According to another view, the text read originally 'I am not your *god*.'[25] This view proposes a change in the Hebrew consonantal text: *'hyh lkm* into *'lhykm*.[26] The manuscripts do not support this change because only a few late Greek and Latin manuscripts point in that direction.[27] Since the manuscript evidence is definitely not in favour of this view, its proponents need to bring forward very strong arguments as to why the text would have been changed so soon. Only the most important ones proposed can be dealt with here.

24. See John F. Hobbins, 'Regularities in Ancient Hebrew Verse: A New Descriptive Model', *ZAW* 119 (2007), pp. 564-85, esp. 584.

25. See esp. Karl Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton* (KHC; Tübingen: Mohr, 1904), p. 20; Artur Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 4th edn, 1963), p. 20; Rudolf Smend, *Die Bundesformel* (ThSt, 68; Zurich: EVZ, 1963), pp. 24-25 (note); Ehrlich, 'Hos. 1:9', pp. 18-19; Pier Giorgio Borbone, *Il libro de profeta Osea: Edizione critica del testo ebraico* (Quaderni di Henoch, 2; orig. diss.; Turin: Zamorani, 1987), esp. p. 137. In this way already J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, V. *Die kleine Propheten* (Berlin: Reimer, 1892), pp. 12, 97; and still earlier C.F. Houbigant.

26. On the other hand, the King James Version seems to suppose an ellipsis or the loss of a word: 'I will not be your *God*' (italics in the original). See [Edward] Pocock[e], *The Theological Works,* II (ed. L. Twells; London: Gosling, 1740), p. 19 (also referring to Ibn Ezra); T.K. Cheyne, *Hosea* (CBSC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1884), p. 44 (referring to Jephet the Karaite); Sydney Lawrence Brown, *The Book of Hosea* (WC; London: Methuen, 1932), p. 9 (also mentioning the possibility of emendation); cf. E. Henderson, *The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets* (London: Hamilton & Adams, 1845), p. 6. For Ibn Ezra, see Abe Lipshitz (ed.), *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea* (New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1988), p. 22: '[he told them] *I will not be* their God; however, he did not mention the word *God* because of great anger.' Of course, the assumption of an accident in the history of the text is rather arbitrary and seems to be based on a lack of understanding of the current text.

27. See Ziegler, *Duodecim prophetae*, p. 148; cf. Ehrlich, 'Hos. 1:9', p. 14; Borbone, *Osea*, p. 137.

The strict formal parallelism between both clauses of the name explanation may in particular be adduced in favour of this view. In the previous section (at point 5) the value of this argument was already questioned. It is also noted in favour of this view that the name explanation then exemplifies a negated form of the widely used covenantal formula (cf. 'I will be for you as god, and you yourselves will be for me as people' in Lev. 26.12). However, we should at least ask ourselves whether the author of Hosea knew the covenantal formula. Although he thinks strongly in terms of reciprocity, he does not show any knowledge of this formula. It should, nevertheless, also be observed that ch. 2, which constitutes the counterpart of ch. 1, does use the alternation of 'my people' and 'your god' (see 2.25 Hebrew / 2.23 [or 22] translations; cf. 2.1/1.10; 4.6, 12; cf. 8.2). Against this background it may be surprising that this alternation is not employed in 1.9. The alternation in ch. 2 is indeed sometimes adduced in favour of another original text in 1.9.[28]

It has been suggested that the original statement that Yhwh is no longer Israel's god sounded too harsh and has therefore been corrected.[29] However, it is not self-evident why the proposed original text would be harsher than the reading of the previous section or that of the next.[30] In fact, the proposed text runs more smoothly, and it is therefore probable that the text in a few manuscripts has been changed in this direction.[31]

There may also have been positive reasons that the author would opt for the present text. If *'ehye* is seen as a name that is negated here (sec. 1), then the reason is clear: to connect the threat with the founding story of Exodus and so to attach more weight to it. Also the third view, to be discussed in the next section, should be evaluated in connection with this point.

3. Hyh l^{e} *as a Clue to the Interpretation*

Grammatically speaking, it is most natural to understand *'ehye* in Hos. 1.9 as a verb form. The literal translation is then 'I shall/will not be for you.' It is argued against this view that such a sentence would have little meaning,

28. Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, p. 97; Smend, *Bundesformel*, p. 38 n. 73.

29. Weiser, *Zwölf kleine Propheten*, p. 20 ('Dieses das Fundament der alttestamentlichen Religion stürzende Urteil klang den Späteren unerträglich und würde . . . abgeschwächt'); he is followed by Smend, *Bundesformel*, p. 38 n. 73; and Ehrlich, 'Hosea 1:9', p. 18.

30. Is this the reason that C.S. Ehrlich also brings forward an argument from the reader's point of view? He remarks in relation to the dominant previous view (sec. 1): 'by removing itself from the accustomed ancient vocabulary of the covenant formula this phrasing would have a mollifying effect on the broad masses, who may have missed the subtlety.' See Ehrlich, 'Hosea 1:9', pp. 17-18.

31. Rudolph, *Hosea*, p. 38; Schmidt, *Exodus*, p. 177.

if it is not completely absurd.[32] Let us, however, not be guided too quickly by the impression created by the translation, and examine more closely the combination of the verb *hyh* and the prepositional element *l*^{e}. In doing so we should also take into account nominal clauses with a predicate introduced by *l*^{e}, because in the combination in question the verb *hyh* serves only to indicate tense or modality (see Chapter 2, sec. 6b, first part). In relation to persons, *the 'predicator'* (hyh) l^{e} *can* in fact *be employed in different ways,* ways that will now be discussed.[33,34]

(1) The construction is often used to indicate a relationship of possession (usually translated with the verb 'have'). A case in point is found in 1 Kgs 20.3. In this verse Aram's king Ben-Haddad declares to Israel's king Ahab: 'Your silver and gold [are] mine (*lî*); your best wives and children [are] mine (*lî*).' His next message is that he will send his servants to take away what pleases them (v. 5). The claim appears therefore to be meant literally, at least afterwards, and obviously concerns taking possession of things. Comparable cases are found elsewhere (Exod. 21.4; Num. 18.15; Ezek. 35.10 [// 'taking possession of']; and also Gen. 38.9; Deut. 28.41; 1 Kgs 3.26—the negation seems to exclude a family relationship in these cases). It is also used for persons or groups in relation to Yhwh (Exod. 13.2; Num. 3.12-13, 45; 8.14, 17; Ezek. 18.4; Ps. 60.9 = 108.9; Job 41.3).[35]

32. See esp. Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*, V (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912), p. 165; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 198 ('seemingly unintelligible', expressing subsequently the view treated in sec. 1); (C.S.) Ehrlich, 'Hosea 1:9', pp. 15-16. The last author thinks that the syntax of Hos. 1.9b MT is of a 'dangling' nature and cannot in itself indicate a personal relation. In connection with the former remark he refers to Ibn Ezra (see n. 26 above).

33. Cf. Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräische Präpositionen,* III. *Die Präposition Lamed* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000). All the cases concerned fall there under the category 'lamed ascriptionis', which is a far more global category (he designates the grammatical relationship as 'prädizierend'). They belong in particular to the subgroups 'P[erson]—*l*^{e}—P mit adverbialem Prädikat', subsections 2114-16/18 and 2124-28, pp. 63-65 and 67. He describes these cases as a matter of 'Zugehörigkeit zu Personen' or 'zu Gott', respectively. His further subdivision is similar to the one mentioned in the main text, but he does not mention something like group 6.

34. In this section cases will virtually be left out of consideration where the subject or the predicate is formed by a term that specifies the nature of the relationship ('servant', 'son', 'wife', etc.). This also applies to cases modified by a second prepositional phrase such as the *k*^{e} phrase found in Amos 9.7 because their meaning is first of all determined by these phrases. As the reader will observe, some transitional cases will nevertheless be mentioned.

35. In Job 41.3 God states that everything belongs to him. This verse is often emended. For a plausible interpretation of the Masoretic text, see John E. Hartley, *Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 527, 531-32.

(2) Related to the previous group are cases of being subjected to someone. That these are not experienced as exactly the same appears from Ahab's answer to Ben-Haddad's first demand quoted in the previous paragraph. In his answer to the latter's claim, Ahab apparently acknowledges him as overlord: 'I [am] yours (*l*^{e}*ka*) and all that [belongs] to me'[36] (1 Kgs 20.4); but after Ben-Haddad's second message, Ahab will go more deeply into the literal meanings concerned and then refer to the restrictions his answer involved. Other cases may also be mentioned here (see 1 Kgs 11.32; Isa. 45.14 [// 'to subject oneself to']). In relation to God, the predicator can also be used in this way. In Ps. 119.94 the poet says to God: 'I [am] yours (*l*^{e}*ka*).' In line with the previous verse ('I will never forget your precepts'), he expresses his faithfulness to God in this verse (also Isa. 44.5; cf. the negative designation in Jer. 5.10).

If Hos. 1.9 were understood in line with the first or second kind of use of the predicator, Yhwh would be saying something like: 'I am not at your disposal! I am not your slave!' In the context, however, there is little or nothing that would support this interpretation.

(3) The predicator may also be used to refer to a family relationship. When Laban pursued Jacob on his flight and the latter imputes bad motives to him, Laban answers (Gen. 31.43): 'The daughters [are] my daughters, the sons my sons and the cattle my cattle; all that you see, it [is] mine (*lî*). To my daughters—what can I [then] do to these today or what to the sons whom they have borne?' Initially Laban seems to say that everything is his possession (as is evident from his mention of the cattle), but, subsequently, referring to the family relationship, he states that he cannot do any harm. The transition is not as harsh as the distinction of these phases suggests because, as a real smooth talker, Laban makes the transition from the one use of the predicator to the other nearly imperceptibly, and actually presents what he has already stated in another light. In Gen. 48.5 the predicator is found in the proclamation by Jacob of an adoptive relationship to Joseph's sons: 'your two sons . . . , they [are] mine, like Reuben and Simeon, let them be mine.' In relation to Yhwh and Israel, the predicator is possibly also used in this way in Isa. 43.1. Just after Yhwh has designated himself as the one who 'created Jacob and 'formed Israel', he says: 'I have called your name, you [are] mine.' In this context, 'calling your name' may mean that like a parent Yhwh has given Jacob the name Israel (similarly 40.26; see for a ref-

36. Cf. Paul Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant: A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (AnBib, 88; orig. diss.; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982), esp. p. 163.

erence to the naming of Israel also 43.7 and, more clearly, 48.1).[37] 'Being mine', then, alludes to a kind of family relationship.

(4) More important in connection with our issue is the use of the predicator to indicate a relationship between a man and a woman, usually a marriage relationship.[38] A few instances also employ only personal pronouns and personal suffixes. For instance, a Philistine proposes to Samson to change his preference from one daughter to another in these words: 'Let her be yours (*l^{e}ka*) instead of her' (Judg. 15.2; similarly Dan. 11.17; cf. also Num. 36.4: belonging to a tribe on the basis of marriage). The predicator is also used for an erotic relationship: 'my beloved [is] mine and I [am] his' (Cant. 2.16; similarly 6.3; 7.11), and for a sexual act (Lev. 21.3; Ezek. 16.15—as a metaphor for idolatry; cf. Hos. 3.3 with *'el*).

As evidenced by Ezek. 16.8 and 23.4, it would not be unique to use the predicator in this sense to refer to the relationship between Yhwh and Israel (although according to current ideas Ezekiel would have been written later than Hosea). If Hos. 1.9 is understood along these lines, Yhwh would deny such a relationship: 'I am no longer married to you. I do not want anything more to do with you!' The statement would be a repudiation, the breakup of a marriage.[39] Such a thought would not be foreign to the first chapters of Hosea. In the next chapters of Hosea (chs. 2 and 3) the relationship with a whorish woman serves as a metaphor for the relationship between Yhwh and Israel. What is more, such a relationship has already been indicated in Hos. 1.2. This verse functions as an introduction to the subject matter of the first three chapters. There are, nevertheless, serious objections against this interpretation. Within ch. 1, v. 2 remains isolated because the chapter concerns only the children born out of this relationship and their names. Consequently, there is no reason to read Hos. 1.9—seven verses later!—in the light of v. 2. Moreover, the immediate context argues against it. Since the

37. For the collocation *qr' b^{e}šēm,* see Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräische Präpositionen,* I. *Die Präposition Beth* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), sec. 194 (*b^{e}* has instrumental function).

38. Cf. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs (eds.), *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, corr. impr., 1952), s.v. *hyh*, sec. II.2h, p. 226.

39. Cf. J.A. Theiner, *Die zwölf kleineren Propheten* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1828), p. 12; Peter Schegg, *Die kleinen Propheten*, I (Regensburg: Manz, 1854), p. 48; Mays, *Hosea*, pp. 29-30 (after interpreting the final clause of Hos. 1.9 in the sense of sec. 1 above, he goes on to read it in the way now under discussion; note esp. 'The negative formulation corresponds to a legal action of divorce'); Alfons Deissler, *Zwölf Propheten: Hosea, Joel, Amos* (NEB; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1981), p. 14; Thomas Edward McComiskey, 'Hosea', in McComiskey (ed.), *The Minor Prophets,* I (Exegetical and Expository Commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), p. 27.

first clause of the name explanation deals with the relationship of the 'people' to Yhwh (formulated with this 'specific term'), it is natural to interpret the second clause (formulated in 'generic terms' because of the personal pronoun and suffix) in line with it and therefore not in terms of a broken marriage.[40]

(5) The predicator is often employed to express attachment to a group. This applies to Josh. 5.13. To 'a man before him with a drawn sword in his hand' Joshua asks: '[Are] you [one] of us (*lānû*) or [one] of our adversaries?' He replies: 'Neither, but as commander of the army of Yhwh I have come.' The answer implies that the predicator does not refer here to taking sides with one of the parties concerned (see next possibility) but only to belonging to one of these groups. In 1 Sam. 14.21 the predicator is used to express the association of some Hebrews with the Philistines before they join the Israelites around Saul and Jonathan. Factually, the predicator indicates their subjection (cf. point 2).

(6) Related to the previous use of the predicator is its use to indicate taking sides with someone in a conflict.[41] In 2 Kgs 10.6 the rebelling Jehu writes to the authorities of Samaria and Jezreel: 'If you [are] for me (*lî*) and if you are ready to hear[ken] to my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel tomorrow at this time.' There is some irony in the use of the word master; in any case, what matters is the present allegiance of the addressees.[42] This seems to be the case also in 1 Chron. 12.19, where Amasai says to David in the time of his persecution by Saul: '[We are] yours, [O] David, and with you, [O] son of Jesse!'

The predicator may be part of a declaration of loyalty (2 Sam. 16.18; 1 Chron. 12.19; in principle in the first person) or of an invitation to that (2 Sam. 20.11; 2 Kgs 10.6; in the second or third person). Cases of this group are not sharply demarcated from examples of the previous group

40. About the formulation of relationships in 'specific' or 'generic terms', see Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant*, p. 4.

41. Many of the next passages are also mentioned together with Hos. 1.9 by Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Lexicon*, s.v. *l*^{e}, sec. 5h(c), p. 515 (mixed with examples of nuance 4). Cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 156-57 (Ps. 118.6), 212 (124.1, 2). See further A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), pp. 27-28: he seems to favour the interpretation under discussion, although he does not exclude the one mentioned in sec. 1. Cf. already E.C.F. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*, VI (Leipzig: Barth, 1836), p. 18. Cf. also Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), sec. 11.2.10d note: they speak of a 'lamed of concern' in connection with Hos. 1.9.

42. Cf. Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant*, esp. pp. 162-64, see also 212.

or of group 2. For instance, it may be thought from what precedes that 2 Chron. 11.12 concerns the subjection of Benjamin and Judah to King Rehoboam, but in connection with what follows, it also implies loyalty. Usually antithetical statements employed in connection with them help to identify examples of the sixth kind of use.

What is important to us is that this kind of use of the predicator is attested not only for a relationship with Yhwh (Exod. 32.26) but also with Yhwh as subject. Sometimes it refers to his faithfulness (Gen. 31.42; Ps. 124.1, 2) or indicates confidence in this (Ps. 56.10; with both aspects: Ps. 118.6, 7; always in the third person). A particular, transitional case is Ps. 73.25: 'Who [is] for me / mine (*lî*) in heaven?' This clause is often supplemented with 'but you',[43] but in that case its ambiguity disappears. Read in the context of the previous verse ('you guide me with your counsel'), the clause indicates God's protection. However, if read in connection with the next verse ('God [is] my portion forever'), it refers to possession (first kind of use) in a metaphorical sense, namely intimacy.

There are obviously reasons to distinguish between the kinds of uses of the predicator *(hyh) l*^{e}, but it is also clear from several examples that no rigid lines can be drawn between them. This is also obvious in *questions in which the predicator is used* such as the following: 'To whom [do] you [belong]?' In Gen. 32.18 and 1 Sam. 30.13, the answers refer to the master of a servant, but it is not obvious that the question always intends this kind of answer. When in Ruth 2.5 Boaz puts the question 'To whom [does] this young woman [belong]?', it is not self-evident that the question relates to Ruth's master; a master normally has sufficient means of his own and does not need to send a servant out to glean ears. In this situation, one is expected to hear most probably the name of the head of her family, less possibly the name of her husband (because Ruth is called a 'young woman', a *na'*^{a}*râ*); but this is not completely excluded.[44] Since an answer in this sense is impossible, the interlocutor has to fall back on a second, more general level of 'belonging to'.[45] He answers by referring to the Moabite provenance of Ruth and the fact that 'she has returned from the field of Moab with Naomi', therefore to the person with whom Ruth associated herself and who is apparently better known to Boaz. In this connection it can be observed that the differ-

43. See, e.g., the NRSV translation.

44. Since the question supposes that a young woman must belong to someone, Phyllis Trible can rightly call it a patriarchal question. See Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT, 2; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), p. 176.

45. Thus, Danna Nolan Fewell and David Miller Gunn, *Compromising Redemption: Relating Characters in the Book of Ruth* (LCBI; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), p. 116, n. 33.

ent kinds of uses of the predicator have as common meaning 'belonging to' in one sense or another; the meaning 'taking sides with someone' is in all probability derived from it since belonging in the personal sphere often implies engagement. Of course, these findings are also important in relation to the last clause of Hos. 1.9; the meaning of the predicator should not be conceived more strictly than necessary.

The last clause of Hos. 1.9 concerns the relation of Yhwh to Israel. In reference to this relation it can be observed that, apart from the obviously metaphorical use of possession in Ps. 73.25, further only the uses of the predicator in the sense of a marriage relation and taking sides with someone are attested, always in an affirmative sense. Application of the other uses to the relation of Yhwh to Israel would evidently be contrary to the idea of Yhwh's superiority. However, because the clause of Hos. 1.9 has a negative content, it cannot be excluded out of hand that also the other kinds of uses play a part.

These are only general considerations. For its particular meaning in Hos. 1.9, the immediate context of the predicator needs to be taken into account.

It is obvious that, parallel with the suffix *-î* of *'ammî* ('my people) in the preceding clause, the *prefix* l^{e} *in Hos. 1.9* means in any case 'belonging'. One could go a step further and state that this belonging in the generally formulated second clause of the name explanation of Hos. 1.9 is interpreted most naturally in the light of the first clause, which speaks more specifically about the relationship of the 'people' to Yhwh (see also under the fourth kind of use of the predicator above). The second clause has, therefore, as a kind of subtext 'I will be no longer your god.' This suggestion, however, raises even more (cf. sec. 2) the question why it is actually said: 'I, I will be no longer yours.' By *'ānōkî*, 'I', the clause is contrasted with the preceding clause, which starts with *'attem*, 'you' (plural). Yhwh says, in the clause concerned, how he will be from his side.[46] In all probability this shift stresses more clearly than the subtext that not just a function of Yhwh is involved (although this function, that he is their god, concerns his principal status) but he, his (personal) presence, as such.[47]

The use of the preformative form *'ehye* in the same clause contrasts with the preceding verbless clause. The verbless, nominal nature of it indicates that the latter clause refers to a state of affairs; it implies the actuality of the

46. Cf. August Wünsche, *Der Prophet Hosea* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1868), p. 31; Schweizer, *Verstehen*, p. 148.

47. Cf. B. Duhm, *Anmerkungen zu den zwölf Propheten* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1911), p. 18: it is 'viel stärker as *l' 'lhykm*: ich will nichts mit euch zu schaffen haben.'

situation.[48] In contrast with that, the preformative verb form *'ehye* points to the future, which may also be the future from now on. In connection with *'ānōkî*, a pronoun that is in this context not necessary, it may also have some modal flavour, such as wanting (cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6e, last part). In this context Yhwh denies therefore outright by means of the negative particle *lō'* that his relationship with Israel will exist any longer (cf. Hos. 5.6). We could render the phrase by 'As for me, I am no longer yours.' In sum, Yhwh moves from the (factual) observation that Israel does not behave itself as his people to the (harsh) denial (with a performative character) that he will any longer be engaged with the Israelites (cf. 4.6).[49]

What this means exactly is left to the associations of the reader, but it sounds in any case very ominous. The cryptic nature of the clause is an example of the allusive style of Hosea and corresponds to similar references in the preceding verses (see vv. 4-5; cf. 7). Its ominous nature is also substantiated by the rest of the book of Hosea. When Israel can no longer count on Yhwh, there will be disasters; and the people will fall into the hands of the enemy (see 9.12, 17; 14.1).[50] For the book of Hosea has as its fundamental assumption that besides Yhwh there is no saviour (13.4).

4. *The Explanation of the Name 'Lo-Ammi' and Those of the Other Children*

It is sometimes stated that Hos. 1.9 cannot be the culmination of the prophetic oracle of ch. 1 if understood in the sense of the third interpretation.[51] Let us therefore examine how the name Lo-Ammi and its explanation fit into the context of ch. 1 of Hosea and whether this argues against or for the views discussed above. We need, then, to investigate *the relationship with the names of the previous children and their explanation.*

The first child is called Jezreel. The explanation reads: 'for in a little while I will call-to-account the blood of Jezreel to the house of Jehu and will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel' (1.4). This explanation is reminiscent of the bloodbath at Jezreel that Jehu caused during his coup d'état (2 Kings 9-10). It is stated that this bloodshed will be avenged.

48. Ladislaus M. v. Pákozdy, 'Die Deutung des *Yhwh*-Namens in Exodus 3:14', *Judaica* 11 (1955), pp. 193-208, esp. 199-200; Robert Kümpel, *Die Berufung Israels: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Hosea* (diss.; Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1973), p. 133.

49. Similarly, Dwight R. Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History: The Early Traditions of Israel in the Prophecy of Hosea* (BZAW, 191; orig. diss.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), p. 108.

50. See G.I. Davies, *Hosea* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 59: 'Israel is to forfeit the divine protection on which she has relied' (referring to W. Rudolph).

51. Thus Ehrlich, 'Hosea 1:9', p. 15.

The second child, a daughter, is called Lo-Ruhamah. This name is a shortened message: 'for I will no (*lō'*) longer have pity (*'araḥēm*) on the house of Israel . . . (*kî*) I will surely . . . (*nāśō' 'eśśā'*) to them (*lā-hem*)' (1.6). The last clause and especially the meaning of the verb *nś'* are heavily debated. The reason is that the context of threat argues for a negative meaning of the clause but the phrasing *nś' l^e* + person(s) has 'forgive' as its standard meaning, with the prefix *l^e* introducing a direct object.[52]

A positive meaning would deviate from the other name explanations. The first clauses of the three interpretations are always connected immediately with the name-giving, and consist of the actual explanation of the names. The second clauses of the first and the third interpretations (1.4, 9) provide additional information by which they surpass the first ones in seriousness. Such a sequence is a regular phenomenon in parallelism, and is often identified by the term 'climactic parallelism'.[53] This does not seem to apply to the second clause of Hos. 1.6. Does this argue for a different interpretation? However, the comparison with the other name explanations can only be a relative argument. Note also that in v. 6 we have to do with a daughter and not with a son, as with the other names! This may point to a different situation, one in which a straight continuation is interrupted.

Unfortunately this *crux interpretum* cannot be dealt within a few sentences.

We can best start to investigate *the second clause of the name explanation in Hos. 1.6* more closely by considering the syntactic constraints in question. The particle *kî* often has an adversative function (as 'but') after a negative clause. Moreover, an infinitive absolute used with a finite verb of the same root (in Hos. 1.6, *nāśō' 'eśśā'*) has frequently the function of emphasizing a contrast.[54] In fact, these two functions are boosted by their coincidence. All clauses elsewhere in which *kî* is followed by a clause with such a 'paronomastic' (or 'tautological') construction and with the same subject as in the preceding clause provide a contrast to these preced-

52. See, e.g., *HALOT,* II, s.v. *ns'*, p. 726; Janet W. Dyk, 'Verbanning of vergeving? Hosea 1:6 in het licht van verbale valentiepatronen', *ACEBT* 17 (1999), pp. 61-73, esp. 66-67. The former work suggests that the fixed phrase originated by ellipsis of a word like *'āwōn*, 'transgression' (cf. Hos. 14.3).

53. This term is applied to Hos. 1.6 by Kümpel, *Berufung Israels*, p. 225 (for his interpretation of the verse see below). This special form is completely in line with the essence of parallelism: 'A is so, and *what's more*, B is so (by seconding, supporting, carrying further).' This sentence is in fact a synthesis of two lines of Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, pp. 8 (main statement) and 54 (esp. the parenthesis).

54. See, e.g., T. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (orig. diss.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985), p. 87.

ing clauses.[55] These syntactical considerations make the following interpretations of the particle *kî* improbable: *kî* as (a) explicative (as 'for'); as (b) consecutive ('so that'); or as (c) assertive-superlative ('let alone that . . .').[56] In the two last views (b and c) the verb is usually taken as modal ('[let alone] that I *should* forgive them'). However, although an infinitive absolute sometimes serves to emphasize the unreality of a statement, the text does not prepare for such a sense in any way.[57] Also improbable is the assumption that the negation of the first clause can be carried over to the second, *kî*-clause; the influence of the negative particle *lō'* never reaches beyond *kî*.[58]

On the basis of these syntactical facts only the following ways of interpreting the last clause of Hos. 1.6 are plausible:

- The clause means a much unexpected turn. First Yhwh expresses his merciless, unpitying attitude towards Israel but then says that he will surely forgive them. Such an interpretation is given by the Targum (but it smoothes the transition: 'yet *if they repent*, I will surely forgive them').[59] In favour of this view it can be adduced that in Hosea such

55. In addition to Hos. 1.6, see also Exod. 23.24; Deut. 4.26; 13.10; 15.8; 20.17; Judg. 15.13; 1 Sam. 6.3; 2 Sam. 24.24 (= 1 Chron. 21.24); 2 Kgs 1.4, 6, 16; Jer. 32.4; 34.3; 44.17; 49.12; Esth. 6.13 (cf. also 1 Kgs 11.22).

56. See, e.g., (a) Schweizer, *Verstehen*, pp. 124, 127; (b) William Rainey Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), pp. 212, 214; van Hoonacker, *Petits prophètes*, p. 18; van Gelderen, *Hosea*, p. 30; (c) August Simson, *Der Prophet Hosea* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1851), pp. 81-82; Wünsche, *Hosea*, p. 25.

57. Contra such a conception, see E.W. Hengstenberg, *Christologie des Alten Testamentes und Commentar über die messianischen Weissagungen*, I (Berlin: Dehmigke, 2nd edn, 1854), pp. 236-37; McComiskey, 'Hosea', p. 24 (referring to GKC sec. 113 l-r). See further Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, sec. 35.3.1b: 'The infinitive [absolute] *usually* emphasizes . . . the force of the verb. When the verb makes an assertion . . . , the notion of certainty is reinforced by the infinitive. . . . By contrast, if the verb in context is irreal, the sense of irreality . . . becomes more forceful.'

58. See, e.g., Dyk, 'Verbanning of vergeving?', p. 68-71 (based on an investigation of the cases concerned; note that Dyk subsumes the previous solution attempt under the present interpretation; see pp. 68, 70). Contra, e.g., Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 189.

59. Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets* (The Aramaic Bible, 14; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), p. 30. See further, e.g., Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, p. 19 (conceiving it as an interpolation); Dyk, 'Verbanning of vergeving', pp. 66-67, 72-73; cf. Wünsche, *Hosea*, pp. 25-27 (with many references to earlier authors). In this connection, Dyk also refers to Ps. 99.8 as similar (p. 73). In fact, the direction of thinking in Hos. 1.6 is opposite to that in Ps. 99.8 (cf. also Exod. 34.6-7), which, firstly, describes the positive attitude of God, and only secondly his handling of wrongdoings: 'You have been a forgiving god (*'ēl nōśē'*) to them, but avenging their acts.'

paradoxical transitions are also found elsewhere (see that from 1.9 to 2.1/1.10; also that in 13.13-15).[60] Understood in this way, the clause also prepares the following verse (1.7) with a positive excursus about Judah.

- The word connection *nś' l*^{e} in Hos. 1.6 has a meaning not attested elsewhere, one that we can only guess. However, in this respect, the testimony of the ancient versions may play a part and also that of possible extra-biblical attestations of this word combination. An obvious starting point for conjectures is the basic meaning of *nś'*: 'lift up, carry'. There are then several possibilities. It is often understood as bringing the people into exile (cf. Hos. 9.3, 15, 17; cf. also *nś'* in 5.14 and in Jer. 23.39). In this case *lā-hem* is understood as a direct object.[61] This interpretation is already found in the Peshitta.[62] The trouble with this interpretation is that when *nś'* has such a meaning, words indicating a person after *l*^{e} always function as an indirect object elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[63] Another interpretation avoids this problem and understands the last clause of the name explanation as elliptical. It would concern the taking away of *raḥamîm*, 'pity/mercy'.[64] However, this would presuppose that *nś'* and *raḥamîm* constitute a fixed phrase and could therefore be called to mind on the basis of the previous words (with only the verb *rḥm*), but there is no evidence for this.[65] Another interpretation takes

60. Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel* (NAC; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1997), p. 61 (adding an excursus about the fundamental theological nature of such a paradox, pp. 63-69). See also Harold Fisch, *Poetry with a Purpose: Biblical Poetics and Interpretation* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), esp. Chapter 8, 'Hosea: A Poetics of Violence', pp. 136-57, esp. 145 ('all these names contain their own antitheses'); Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), pp. 45-46 (they develop 'an anticipation of reversal'). Cf. Mitchell, 'Hosea 1-2', p. 123.

61. See esp. McComiskey, 'Hosea', pp. 24, 25. Thus already Ibn Ezra, see Lipshitz, *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, p. 22. Cf. Rudolph, *Hosea*, p. 37 ('sondern [ich werde] es gänzlich beseitigen'); Macintosh, *Hosea*, p. 21: he translates with 'I will annihilate them completely', and also refers to Ibn Janah, who quotes Job 32.22.

62. Briefly discussed in Mark Sebök, *Die syrische Uebersetzung der zwölf kleinen Propheten* (diss.; Breslau: Barth, 1887), pp. 10-11.

63. Dyk, 'Verbanning of vergeving?', p. 66; she also notes (p. 65) that in connection with *nś'* the carrying subject is always included in the movement of the object carried and therefore does not allow a separation between them.

64. See, e.g., Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 8; Kümpel, *Berufung Israels*, pp. 77, 224-25; Edmond Jacob, 'Osée', in Jacob, C.-A. Keller and S. Amsler, *Osée, Joël, Abdias, Jonas, Amos* (CAT; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1965), p. 22 (interestingly, he suggests that the text plays with the ambiguity of the verb to signify the impossibility of forgiveness). This view is already articulated in Rosenmüller, *Scholia,* VI, p. 17.

65. Cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 194; Dyk, 'Verbanning of vergeving?', p. 71.

as its point of departure the influence that the opposition between the two clauses has on the understanding of *nś'*. The verb *rḥm* in the first clause implies a kind of giving (cf. Deut. 13.18; 1 Kgs 8.50; Jer. 42.12); against this background, *nś'* in the second clause can get the meaning of 'taking away' (cf. Ezek. 10.7). Translated as literally as possible, this clause is then read: 'but taking away, (yeah) I will take away from them' (cf. 2.11/9[8]; 9.12; 13.11, 15). An English reader may feel that the direct object is missing, but also in other examples of the infinitive absolute construction the focus on the action of the verb can be so strong that the object may remain unmentioned. Moreover, also in such cases the contrast with another verb often plays a part.[66] An indefinite object might be added in English by implication: 'I will take away from them *whatever it may be*.'[67] A relatively simple solution to the difficulty of the verse is the suggestion that the verb has here the intransitive meaning of 'rising up' (cf. Hos. 13.1; Nah. 1.5; Ps. 89.10),[68] but the question is then whether the combination with the prefix *l*^{e} allows the negative meaning of 'turning against'.[69] In any case, the Septuagint translation, 'I will totally oppose / align myself against them (*antitassomenos antitaxomai autois*)', argues for such an interpretation.[70] Since this rendering reflects the understanding of this root by the Septuagint

66. Cf. Gen. 44.15; Exod. 34.7 (≈ Num. 14.18; Nah. 1.3); Num. 23.11; Deut. 15.10; 22.4; 1 Sam. 22.22; 26.25; 30.8; 2 Sam. 24.24 (= 1 Chron. 21.24); Isa. 6.9; Jer. 9.3; 25.28; 49.12. For the investigation of this subject, initially the list used was made by A. Rieder, but it appeared to be incomplete. See Rieder, *Die Verbindung des Infinitivus absolutus mit dem Verbum finitum desselben Stammes im Hebräischen* (diss.; Leipzig: Metzger & Wittig, 1872), pp. 28-31.

67. This interpretation is in fact an elaboration of the one already given by Hengstenberg, *Christologie des Alten Testamentes* I, p. 237: there is 'kein Objekt eben weil *Alles* verstande werde' (italics mine). This interpretation was supported in the *ACEBT* version of this chapter (see n. 3 above).

68. For the meaning of the verb, see *DCH*, V, s.v. *nś'*, esp. sec. 17, p. 768.

69. For an interpretation in this sense, see Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100* (AB; Garden CityNY: Doubleday, 1968), p. 317 (at Ps. 89.23, with the punctuation emended, there with *b*^{e} as preposition); *DCH,* V, sec. 17b, p. 768 (also Ps. 139.20, with a *resh* emended into *lamed,* which results in *'al* as preposition); cf. J. Qyl (or Yehudah Qil) on Hosea in the first part of a Hebrew commentary on the Twelve Prophets (Jerusalem, 1973; he refers to Deut. 28.49, where *nś'* occurs with the preposition *'al,* however, the verb is used transitively there); his exegesis is mentioned by Macintosh, *Hosea,* p. 22 (also referring to Kimchi in this connection). Jenni indicates in connection with the 'lamed applicationis' that this can have a pejorative function (besides a meliorative one). See Jenni, *Die Präposition Lamed*, sec. 5, e.g. *ṣrr* hif. 'cause distress'; *'nh* hitp. 'seek a quarrel against'.

70. Cf. Rudolph, *Hosea*, p. 38 (also referring to Pss. 55.16 *qerē* and 89.23); Macintosh, *Hosea*, p. 24.

translators,[71] it is probably not the mere result of the expectation the context raises.[72]

- In principle, the clause in question could also be ambiguous. From the preceding clause it would get a negative meaning; from the following one ('and/but the house of Judah I will show pity') a positive one. In that case we can speak of a 'Janus parallelism'.[73] Of course, the likelihood of this interpretation depends on the plausibility of the interpretation of the clause in a negative sense.

From a rhetorical point of view, one can *expect an increase in threat in relation to the names* in ch. 1, and therefore that the threat expressed by the name of the third and last child exceeds all the threats expressed by those of the two former children.[74] Some formal features support this position. The particle of negation, *lō'*, shows a higher concentration towards the end of the threats.[75] And it is only at the end, in v. 9, that the people concerned are directly addressed.[76] Also, the contents argue for the idea of an increase. The name of the first child is connected with the elimination of the royal house; that of the second, with the termination of Yhwh's compassion on the nation of Israel; and that of the third, with Yhwh's breaking off his relationship with them. It can also be noted that the first name refers to an act; the second, to the attitude of Yhwh; and the third, to the involvement of Yhwh as such. Seen in this way, the movement is towards the more abstract but also—and this counts probably more—towards the more personal.

71. See Eberhard Bons, Jan Joosten and Stephan Kessler, *Les douze prophètes: Osée* (La Bible d'Alexandrie; Paris: Cerf, 2002), p. 66: they observe that similarly written *nšh,* meaning 'forget', is rendered in Obad. 7 by *antitassomai*; this also applies to *nś'* in 1 Kgs 11.34, against all contextual probability.

72. Contra Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, p. 19.

73. See Scott B. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job* (JSOTSup, 223; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 151. He also points to other instances of this 'Janus parallelism' in Hosea (2.8-9; 4.2-3, 7-8, 16-17; 6.7-9; 7.16). See pp. 151-54.

74. This increase in threat is indicated in many commentaries, e.g., those of Brown, *Hosea*, p. 9; Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, pp. 19-20; van Gelderen, *Hosea*, p. 33; Knight, *Hosea*, p. 47; Kümpel, *Berufung Israels*, pp. 132-33; Jeremias, *Hosea*, pp. 32-33. See especially Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 23; James Limburg, *Hosea—Micah* (IBC; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), p. 9. Note, however, that Rudolph, *Hosea*, p. 54, denies that the third name implies a progression in comparison to the second.

75. Cf. Schweizer, *Verstehen*, pp. 132-33 and also 160: 'Die kommunikative Absicht des Verfassers besteht also in wachsendem Mass darin Erwartungen, die er offenbar bei seinen Hörern/Lesern voraussetzt, aufzugreifen und abzublocken, zu stoppen.'

76. See Wünsche, *Hosea*, pp. 30-31; van Gelderen, *Hosea*, p. 34; Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 22; Jeremias, *Hosea*, p. 33; cf. Mays, *Hosea*, p. 29 ('due to the tenacity of terms in a [the covenantal] formula fixed in its usage as a declaration addressed to the people'). See also David Allen Hubbard, *Hosea* (TOTC; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1989), pp. 65-66.

In this connection, the question whether the last clause of the name explanation in Hos. 1.6 affirms and explains the threat expressed in the first clause or is, on the contrary, a kind of limitation of it does not really seem to matter. (It should only be observed that the meaning of 'forgiving' would obviously leave more room for a restoration of the relationship at this point.)[77] We can go even a step further and note that the expectation of an increase in threat is not tied to a particular interpretation of Hos. 1.9. All three major interpretations of this verse dealt with in the preceding sections comply in fact with it. Whether this verse is interpreted as a reversal of Yhwh's historical engagement with Israel, a denial of his status as their (covenantal) God, or a complete withdrawal from them, it will be the culmination of all threats. Consequently, the expectation of an increase in threat cannot be used against one of these interpretations.

5. *Final Remarks*

(1) The last two sections showed that the interpretation of Hos. 1.9b with *'ehye* in its usual grammatical function goes quite well with the context. In connection with the preceding clause and in particular with *'ammî*, the associated prefix *l*^{e} indicates first of all belonging. The use of the preformative form *'ehye* contrasts with the preceding verbless clause and signifies together with the negative particle *lō'* the termination of a state: 'as for me, I will no longer be yours.' Yhwh denies categorically, therefore, the continuation of any relationship with Israel. As a consequence, the parallelism of the name explanation does not mean that the second clause simply repeats the first in different words but rather exceeds the first in harshness. In its brevity it sounds very ominous: what are the people of Israel if Yhwh, their god, no longer makes a stand for them? If the explanation is read in this way, the name of the third child in Hos. 1.9 expresses a threat clearly exceeding the threats linked to the naming of the previous children.

(2) There is all in all no reason to assume that *'ehye* in Hos. 1.9b has a function different from its usual one of indicating future tense. There is nothing about the verse or explanation of the name that would draw attention to the form *'ehye* itself; as it stands, the text is perfectly grammatical. This also applies to other cases where a connection is suggested with the divine designation Ehyeh, found in Exod. 3.14a (such as in Ps. 50.21 or instances of the covenanal formula).[78] In fact, in those cases there are even fewer argu-

77. Cf. Sweeney, *Twelve Prophets*, I, p. 21.

78. Contra Isbell, 'Divine Name', pp. 102-105; A.J.O. van der Wal, '"Hij is het, die ons Zijne vriendschap biedt". Ex. 3:14 nogmaals gelezen', *Ter Herkenning* 19 (1991), pp. 109-14, esp. 112-13. Cf. also n. 5 above.

ments (in comparison to sec. 1) to adduce in favour of such an interpretation.[79] If there is a good grammatical explanation, why, for instance, should one relate the use of *'ehye* in the formula of divine support or in the divine part of the covenantal formula to the divine designation Ehyeh for reasons other than that is an attractive theological idea? This conclusion also has as corollary that Hos. 1.9 and the other passages concerned with *'ehye* cannot be used as an argument for a particular interpretation of Exod. 3.14.

(3) The interpretation given of Hos. 1.9 also implies the rejection of another interpretation. The text of Hos. 1.9 deviates in all probability from the usual alternation of 'my people' and 'your god', but this by itself does not force us to assume another, more original text with the word 'god' (sec. 2). Such a conjecture would express only what is implied in the present text.

(4) The idea of God's withdrawal is attested several times elsewhere in Hosea. See for instance 5.6: 'he has withdrawn from them' (see also 5.15 and 9.12). In all probability, such words are aimed against the popular belief that Israel can count on the unconditional support of Yhwh.[80] Indications of this belief are found in other passages of Hosea. A case in point is the sentence that Israel cries to God in a moment of crisis: 'My god, we, Israel, know you!', and in this way refers to the covenantal relationship ('know') with God (8.2; see also 2.9/7[6]; 4.16; 6.3). In this context the shift from 'I am no longer your god' to the words 'I am no longer yours' indicates an increase in harshness. With it the prophet intends definitely to undermine the belief that God is always at hand, at their disposal.[81] Since immediately after the threats the text speaks of promises (from 2.1/1.10 on), it may be assumed that the primary intention of the denial is to shake up the addressees in their beliefs.

Seen in this way, the discussion about the interpretation of Hos. 1.9 is not simply a sophisticated issue. This conclusion is also probable because the first chapter of Hosea constitutes the introduction to the book and as such

79. Isbell and also van der Wal (see previous note) seem to think that if the context is obviously future orientated, then the use of *'ehye* is superfluous and must have another reason. In this context they do therefore not consider the well-known phenomenon of linguistic redundance.

80. Cf. Smend, *Bundesformel*, p. 24; Ehrlich, 'Hos. 1.9', p. 17 note (speaking about a general tendency of the prophets).

81. Cf. F. Charles Fensham, 'The Covenant-Idea in the Book of Hosea', in I.H. Eybers *et al.*, *Studies on the Book of Hosea and Amos* (OTWSA, 7-8; cong.; Potchefstroom: Pre Rege, 1966), pp. 35-49, esp. 40: he translates Hos. 1.9 as 'you are not my people and I am not at your disposal.' The translation is not explained; on the contrary, he connects the last clause clearly with the marriage metaphor (cf. sec. 3, point 4 above).

presents a preview of what will come.[82] The correct interpretation of Hos. 1.9 is therefore an important contribution to the correct understanding of the book Hosea as a whole!

(5) Is the connection of Hos. 1.9 with Exod. 3.14 totally wrong? It is, of course, always possible to compare one passage of a biblical book with that of another. What is more, the bringing together of Torah and Prophets in one collection of Holy Scriptures stimulates looking for links between them.[83] This is, however, different from reading one text into another. Nevertheless, it is also possible to connect the verses concerned in a closer, but still appropriate, way. According to Exodus, with the new divine name Ehyeh, Yhwh underpins a new, mediated relationship to Israel in the early days of its genesis as a people. By contrast, in Hos. 1.9 Yhwh denies that he will have a relationship with the people of Israel any longer. And so Hos. 1.9 may be understood as, in fact, revoking and abolishing all that is/was said in Exod. 3.14. Note that such an interpretation is based not only on the use of the form *'ehye*. What makes such an interpretation attractive is that it underlines the serious nature of the threat of Hos. 1.9 by putting it into a great historical-narrative perspective. In my view, such an interpretation brings to light the value, if not the truth, of the rejected interpretation of *lo'-'ehye* as a direct reference to the divine name *'ehye*.

82. Thus Jacob, 'Osée', p. 23.
83. Cf. Schweizer, *Verstehen*, p. 135.

4

Exodus 3.14 in the Septuagint: 'I Am the One "Being"'—A Metaphysical Statement?

The divine statement in Exod. 3.14a is translated in the Old Greek version of the Septuagint as: *egō eimi ho ōn*. That is, literally rendered: 'I am the be-ing.' For centuries, this rendering was generally understood in a highly philosophical way. God would state here that he is the true being. A clear illustration of this interpretation is already found in Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE–40 CE). For a long time the Hebrew source text was usually interpreted in a similar way in Christian Europe (see Chapter 5, sec. 4). Understood in this sense, Exod. 3.14a served as an important link in the history of ideas between the Jewish Bible and Greek philosophy.[1]

However, this interpretation of the Hebrew text became more and more disputed during the last two centuries; at present nobody believes that we should understand it in that way. On the other hand, opinions are still divided about the original meaning of the Septuagint rendering. Its meaning is very often discussed, in particular in the margin of the exegesis of the Hebrew text. Many people are still convinced that the rendering was inspired by Greek philosophy and that it indicates, therefore, true, essential being.[2] Understood in this sense, nowadays it is often contrasted with the

1. See Étienne Gilson, *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (EPhM, 33; Paris: Vrin, 2nd edn, 1944 ([1]1932), esp. pp. 50-62; Paul Vignaux *et al.*, *Dieu et l'Être: Exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de Coran 20,11-24* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978); Alain de Libera and Émilie Zum Brunn (eds.), *Celui qui est: interpretations juives et chrétiennes de l'Exode 3:14* (Paris: Cerf, 1982).

2. Alain Le Boulluec and Pierre Sandevoir, *L'Exode* (La Bible d'Alexandrie; Paris: Cerf, 1989), p. 92: 'on y voit généralement l'entrée par effraction dans la théologie biblique de l'ontologie grecque.' Cf. p. 127 (at 8.18/22). See also Morton Smith, 'The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism, with Especial Reference to Goodenough's Work on Jewish Symbols', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 40 (1957-58), pp. 473-512, esp. 474 ('the LXX turned the obscure Hebrew . . . into the dear Platonism, "I am the one being"'); Elias Bickermann, 'The Septuagint as a Translation' (orig.

Hebrew text, which would refer to being present and active.[3] Nevertheless, several authors question the philosophical affinity of the Septuagint rendering or even reject this view outright.[4] However, alternative interpretations are not well established. In particular the idea that the Septuagint rendering is simply an affirmation of God's existence has some support.[5] In any case, the depth of the discussion about the rendering is inversely proportional to its frequency. Discussion usually consists of nothing more than a few lines and the argumentation is always poor.

The question of the original meaning of the Septuagint rendering will be at the centre of this chapter.[6] Before dealing with it, Philo's interpretation of Exod. 3.14 will be investigated. This will serve as a reference point for the influence that Greek philosophy could have on the interpretation of this verse. The starting point for the study of the rendering itself will be the use of the Greek verb for 'being', the syntax of this rendering, and a comparison of both with their counterparts in the Hebrew source text. The heart of the study will consist of a comparison with other translation changes in Exodus in order to discover a pattern and theological motivation that may clarify the

1959) in Bickermann, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History,* I (AGAJU, 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 167-200, esp. 194 (with reference to Morton Smith: 'the "Seventy" Platonized the Lord of Israel'); R.P. Carroll, 'Strange Fire: Abstract of Presence Absent in the Text—Meditations on Exodus 3', *JSOT* 61 (1994), pp. 39-58, esp. 52 ('The Greek translator . . . chose to interpret the force of the statement as an ontological claim').

3. E.g. Ladislaus M. v. Pákozdy, 'Die Deutung des *Jhwh*-Namens in Exodus 3:14', *Judaica* 11 (1955), pp. 193-208, esp. 196; James Plastaras, *The God of Exodus: The Theology of the Exodus Narratives* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1966), pp. 94-95; Josef Scharbert, *Exodus* (NEB; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1989), p. 23; Rochus Zuurmond, 'De machten', *Om het levende Woord* 7 (1997), pp. 28-36, esp. 33 (the meaning of being and existence contrasts with the Hebrew text, which would refer to power and authority).

4. John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SBLSCS, 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), p. 34: 'It is doubtful whether one should understand *ho ōn* as anything more than this straightforward attempt to make an acceptable Greek version of the Hebrew; it is not a philosophic statement; it is rather a religious affirmation.'

5. See esp. B.N. Wambacque, '*'Ehᵉyeh ʾᵃšer 'ehᵉyeh*', *Bib* 59 (1978), pp. 317-38, esp. 322 ('Elle a pensé à un Dieu "existant" plutôt qu'a un Dieu "agissant"'); K.-H. Bernhardt, s.v. *hāyāh*, *TDOT*, III, p. 380 ('the only one who is "real" [for Israel], the only one among the gods who exists'); Josef Schreiner, 'Thora in griechischem Gewand: Dekalog und Bundesbuch (Ex 20-23)', in H. Merklein, K. Müller and G. Stemberger (eds.), *Bibel in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition* (Festschrift J. Maier; BBB, 88; Frankfurt: Hain, 1993), pp. 33-55, esp. 45 ('greift in 3,14 auf Anschauungen zurück, die in seiner Umwelt gelaüfig waren: *einai* im Sinn der Existenzaussage wird von den Göttern gebraucht').

6. The main part of this chapter (secs. 2, 3.c-d, and 6, points 2.b-c and 3.a) corresponds to an article published in Dutch under a similar title: 'Exodus 3:14 in de Septuaginta—"Ik ben de 'Zijnde'": een metafysische uitspraak?', *NTT* 53 (1999), pp. 1-16. The contents of this main part has been rather thoroughly revised and enlarged; moreover, several (sub)sections are added.

rendering. Besides that, the historical and ideological environment of the Septuagint rendering will be considered and what this means in this connection. Finally, the first echoes of the rendering will be discussed, in particular those in other biblical books.

The importance of this study should be obvious: the rendering of Exod. 3.14a played an important part in the connection between Greek philosophy and the Jewish Bible within history, and therefore a clarification of how the rendering originally functioned can be useful in a reconsideration of this relationship. Moreover, this rendering and its interpretation have also had a big influence on the image of 'the' Septuagint as a whole. This it is true up to this day, although now it is known how diverse this work is in its composition. Therefore, a thorough investigation of the rendering of Exod. 3.14a and its first impact can contribute to a more adequate view of the Septuagint.

1. *A Preliminary: Philo on Exodus 3.14-15*

In general, Philo uses the articular (with a definite article) singular of the participle of 'being' in Greek as a designation or characterization of God.[7] The neuter form *to on* occurs regularly, sometimes the masculine *ho ōn*. The forms alternate occasionally with each other.[8] For beings other than God the singular is used only a few times but then virtually always with an adjective.[9] The singular should be distinguished from the plural used substantivally. The plural (only used in cases other than the nominative, in particular the genitive, *tōn ontōn*) deals with states of affairs or with things. God can also be counted as one of these beings but only in an exclusive position as (a) the only beatific, (b) eldest, (c) sublime (*aristos*), (d) incomparable (*asynkritos*), (e) most necessary one (*anankaiotaton*) of them, but often he is set apart from them as (f) their father, (g) 'sublime origin', (h) 'unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal (*paradeigmatikē*) essence' or simply as (i) their god.[10]

The designation *to on* and the variant *to ontōs on* ('the real being') have been borrowed from Plato (see esp. *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*). In his work the designation refers to an unchanging, stable being in contrast with the changing, fleeting becoming of the world. It is considered reality as opposed to

7. A list of participles and infinitives of *einai* in Philo's writings supplied by Dr Kåre Fuglseth was a great help to me for finding out the particularities of this participle in Philo's work.

8. See *Det* 160-61; *Deus* 69; *Mut* 10-11; *Somn* 1.230-31; *Abr* 121-22.

9. *Gig* 3: 'unique being' (of the sun); *Deus* 79: 'mortal being.' See also *(mē) on* in *Aet* 5-6 in a discussion of Stoic conceptions.

10. See (a) *Sacr* 40; (b) *Conf* 180, *Mut* 15; (c) *Fug* 91,141, *Mut* 216, *Virt* 179; (d) *Fug* 141; (e) *Spec* 1.332; (f) *Cher* 44; (g) *Decal* 52; (h) *Mos* 1.158; (i) *Leg* 3.39, respectively.

appearance. This conception is also found in Philo.[11] However, whereas Plato connects *to on* with the eternal Ideas (or Forms), Philo relates it to God. In line with his positioning of God discussed in the previous paragraph, Philo uses this term in particular to indicate God's transcendent and foundational nature in relation to other beings.

Ho Ōn *as a Proper Name or Else*. Almost all instances of the form *ho ōn* (masculine, nominative) in Philo's work relate to the biblical text of Exod. 3.14.[12] A few texts state that in this verse God 'is called the being by proper name'.[13] In a writing such as *De mutatione*, however, he equates the statement of Exod. 3.14a with 'to-be I am qua nature, not to-be-said', and concludes from this that God has no proper name.[14] The idea that God has no name is also found elsewhere in Philo's work.[15]

How can these contradictory conclusions be explained? It is first of all important to realize the difficulties Philo faced in relation to the biblical text. A reader of the Septuagint could understand the divine answer 'I am *ho ōn*' in v. 14a as an answer to the request for the name of v. 13. However, it is not a typical answer to the question: Philo observes rightly that God apparently refers to his being, something that may easily be heard in contrast with what is asked (even more if we take the use of the article *ho* into account; see the remark about it at the end of sec. 2a). The statement that God does not have a proper name may nevertheless be surprising because the next v. 15 clearly speaks about his name. However, it should be observed that in this respect the Greek text (like the Hebrew original) confronts the reader with another

11. *Deus* 4; cf. (in other terms or more implied) *Post* 28; *Mut* 27-28, 57, 87.

12. With a quotation of the divine statement: *Det* 160; *Mut* 11; *Somn* 1.231; *Mos* 1.75; with a clear reference to it: *Abr* 121. The exceptions have an adjunct and obviously call to mind a biblical context: *Opif* 172 ('the truly being is one'; cf. Deut. 6.4); *Abr* 143 (he notes in connection with Gen. 18.16–19.1 that 'the one being in truth' confines himself to giving good gifts and leaves the punishment to his powers [the accompanying angels]).

13. *Abr* 121; according to *Deo* 4 he is called so, but subsequently it is denied that it is really his 'proper and legitimate name'.

14. See *Mut* 11; similarly *Somn* 1.230-31; *Mos* 1.75 (for the last two places, see below in the main text). See also David T. Runia, 'Naming and Knowing: Themes in Philonic Theology' (orig. 1988) in Runia, *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990), Part XI, pp. 69-91, esp. 76. According to Runia, it appears from what follows in *Mut* 11 that *onoma kyrion* there refers to 'a legimate name' ('as opposed to an improper or metaphorical appellation') and not to 'a personal proper name'. In this connection, see also Stephanos Matthaios, '*Kyrion onoma:* Zur Geschichte eines grammatischen Terminus', in P. Swiggers and A. Wouters (eds.), *Ancient Grammar: Content and Context* (Orbis.Sup, 7; Leuven: Peeters, 1996), pp. 55-77.

15. See *akatanomastos*, 'unnamable': *Somn* 1.67 (cf. *Deo* 4 and the use in a quotation of Emperor Gaius Caligula in *Legat* 353) and further n. 25 below.

difficulty. In v. 15a '[The] Lord, the God of your fathers (*Kyrios ho theos tōn paterōn hymōn*), the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob', replaces *ho ōn* in the message of v. 14b in a further identical statement ('. . . has sent me to you'). As a matter of course, the question then arises as to what the relationship is between these two answers.

It is evident that Philo's interpretation is entirely dependent on the Greek translation. He does not show any awareness that *Kyrios* in the translation of this verse is the rendering of the specific divine name Yhwh.[16] Quite the opposite, he sees the divine designations at the beginning of the verse as surrogate names that meet the need of people to use names for God.[17] In his extant work v. 15 is discussed only within the view that according to v. 14 God has no name. In the context of this discussion, Philo emphasizes in particular the linking of these designations to the patriarchs (who are for him symbols of virtues).[18] It is particularly significant in this connection that he can take *Kyrios* and *ho theos*, at the beginning of God's third answer, as a single designation.[19] Note that in this context he handles the two terms differently from how he does elsewhere in his work, in which he connects

16. In this connection, see also his interpretation in *Mut* 13 of *to onoma mou kyrion*, 'my name the Lord', in Exod. 6.3 as a case of hyperbaton (unusual word order): it should be understood as *onoma mou to kyrion*, 'my proper name', on which basis Philo can conclude from this verse that the proper name has never been revealed. See for this F.H. Colson in Colson and G.H. Whitaker, *Philo: In Ten Volumes,* V (LCL; London: Heinemann, 1968 [1st impr. 1934]), p. 149 note.

17. About Philo's use of the term *katachrēsis* (i.e., making surrogate names), see the discussion by Runia, 'Naming and Knowing', pp. 83-89; John Whittaker, 'Catachresis and Negative Theology: Philo of Alexandria and Basilides', in S. Gersh and C. Kannengiesser (eds.), *Platonism in Late Antiquity* (CJAn, 8; dedicated to E. des Places; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), pp. 61-82; Albert C. Geljon, 'Philo of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa on Moses at the Burning Bush', in G.H. van Kooten (ed.), *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the Pagan Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity* (TBN, 9; cong.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), pp. 225-36, esp. 228.

18. *Mut* 12; *Abr* 51-52; *Mos* 1.76.

19. *Mut* 12. In the other texts about Exod. 3.15, Philo seems to leave this double designation out of consideration. According to *Mos* 1.76, Moses should 'make clear to them not only that I am God but also god of the three men'. According to *Abr* 51 'he united the specific name (*to idion onoma*)' with theirs, apparently then referring to the word *theos* (see the continuation of the text). See also *Mos* 2.171 (cf. *Post* 165; *Ebr* 45; *Somn* 1.229; *Mos* 2.205; *Decal* 8; *Spec* 1.332): *theos* is a designation that fits only the God of the Scriptures. Contra Gertraut Kweta, *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen in der Gedankenwelt des Philo von Alexandrien* (EHS, 20/403; diss.; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1996), pp. 390-91: she thinks that here a transcendent 'vollgültige Name Gottes' is meant. Apparently she does not realize the grammatical connotations of the terms used by Philo (see n. 24 below).

them with the two principal ways God acts in the world: the power of ruling and the power of creative activity, respectively.[20]

It is quite consistent with his interpretation of v. 14a and his discussion of the divine designations in v. 15 that Philo contrasts the latter with the former by the adversative conjunction *de*.[21] Presumably this *de* in his exegesis reflects *palin* in the Septuagint, which may express not only continuity ('further', like its Hebrew counterpart *'ōd*) but also opposition ('but').[22] In agreement with this contrast, his interpretation of the two verses does not show any trace of the now common view that Exod. 3.14 gives an etymological explanation of God's personal name.

Philosophical Interpretation of ho Ōn. It should, however, also be noted that Philo's repeated interpretation of the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a as 'my nature is to be, not to be said' goes much further than the conclusion that God does not immediately give his name but first of all refers to his (extra-linguistic) being. His contrasting of saying and being is obviously without restrictions. With this remark, we are moving from Philo's exegetical issues to his philosophical–theological interests. What his interpretation implies becomes much clearer if it is formulated a little differently: 'my nature is simply to be, not to be something.' In this way, the linguistic basis of Philo's statement becomes obvious: God's nature is such that he cannot be predicated, cannot be qualified more precisely. It is consistent with this inference that Philo himself says that 'being (*to on*) qua being (*hēi on*)[23] does not belong to the relative things (*tōn pros ti*).'[24] This interpretation of

20. E.g. *Cher* 27-28; *Sacr* 59; *Her* 166; *Fug* 95; *Abr* 121; *QE* 2.66.

21. *Mut* 12; *Mos* 1.76. See David T. Runia, 'God of the Philosophers, God of the Patriarchs: Exegetical Backgrounds in Philo of Alexandria', in Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers: A Collection of Papers* (SVigChr, 32; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 206-18, esp. 214.

22. See Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. *palin*, pp. 752-53.

23. *Mut* 27; cf. *Abr* 125 ('the being [who is] according to himself [*kath' hauton*], independent of something'); *Spec* 1.209 ('the being [that is] for itself [*di' auto*] being'); *Mut* 7, in which the relative clause clarifies the term by means of a restriction ('the being that is being in truth'). See also Runia, 'Naming and Knowing', p. 80 note: he points there to the possible Aristotelian background of the designation in *Mut* 27.

24. *Mut* 27. Abstractly and independently used *pros ti* also occurs in 28; *Abr* 51; *Decal* 30, 31. It has a philosophical flavour; see Runia, 'Naming and Knowing', pp. 79-80; but in *Mut* 27 (in connection with *katachrēstikōs*), 28 and *Abr* 51 also a grammatical one; see Colson in Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*, V, p. 587; VI (1966 [1st impr. 1935]), p. 597. See further Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, 'The Treatment of Relational Nouns in Ancient Grammar', *Orbis: Bulletin international de documentation linguistique* 38 (1995), pp. 149-78.

Exod. 3.14 also agrees with other negative definitions of God in his work.[25] Presumably, if Philo sometimes also states that God's proper name is Being, it is just another way of referring to the transcendence and exclusivity of God.

Up to now Philo's interpretation of Exod. 3.14 in *De mutatione* 11 was the focus of attention. In the next part his exegeses of this verse in other works will be discussed, and in particular attention will be paid to the different ways he deals there with the notion of being.

In *De vita Mosis*, in which he sticks to the biblical narrative rather closely, Philo says in 1.75 that the divine statement intends to 'teach the difference between what is (*ontos*) and what is not (*mē ontos*)'. Both *ontos* and *mē ontos* are used without an article. In all probability this indicates that they do not signify specialized concepts.[26] In Classical Greek *on* used as a noun indicates first of all what is actually the case, the facts, the truth; conversely, *mē on* is connected with what seems false, lies and false belief.[27] The immediate context argues for these meanings: the question of Exod. 3.13 is related by Philo to an awareness of Moses that people will consider him a deceiver if he could not say the divine name.[28] According to Philo, the divine statement thus indicates that truth can be found on the side of God. What the counterpart, 'what is not', implies in this context is not so clear. We might be inclined to think of the other gods. In another place in Philo, 'what is not truly' has clearly this meaning.[29] However, since the immediate

25. In particular *arrētos*, 'ineffable': apart from *Mut* 14-15 also in *Her* 170; *Somn* 1.67; *Deo* 4; cf. also *akatalēptos*, 'ungraspable/beyond comprehension', e.g. *Mut* 15; *Somn* 1.67; *Deo* 4.

26. Differently, Kweta, *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen*, pp. 368-82: she identifies the two terms with God and the world of things, respectively; likewise Runia, 'God of Philosophers/Patriarchs', p. 209: 'God alone is the Existent (or the One Who is)—in contrast to non-being, i.e., created reality.'

27. Charles H. Kahn, *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2nd edn, 2003), pp. 349-55, 366-67, 455; also Kahn, 'Why Existence Does Not Emerge as a Distinct Concept in Greek Philosophy', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 58 (1976), pp. 323-34, esp. 330. See further Eva-Carin Gerö, 'Negatives and Noun Phrases in Classical Greek: A Reconsideration', *Glotta* 77 (2001), pp. 38-52: she points to the 'intensional' (≈ modal) nature of *mē*, also in relation to *on(ta)* (see esp. pp. 43-45)—it functions as negation in relation to 'belief worlds'.

28. See *Mos* 1.74. Generally speaking, the terms in question have the aforementioned meanings in a context of cognition (see also *Abr* 119: *Somn* 1.231 [dealt with hereafter in the main text]; *Ios* 126). This use should be distinguished from their meanings in the context of creation (e.g. *Opif* 81) and procreation (e.g. *Deus* 119).

29. *QG* 1.36; cf. *Post* 165; *Ebr* 45; *Spec* 1.332. See also *Mos* 1.23-24, 88 in a similar sense in the more immediate context. For an interpretation of Philo's *Mos* 1.75 in the sense mentioned, see Esther Starobinski-Safran, 'Exode 3,14 dans l'oeuvre de Philon d'Alexandrie', in Vignaux, *Dieu et l'Être* (see n. 1), pp. 47-55, esp. 49.

context of the quotation from *De vita Mosis* does not guide the reader in this direction, it is possible to understand the term in a more general way and to associate it with all misleading religious and philosophical conceptions.

Philo subsequently concludes, in line with what has already been mentioned, that God has no name: 'they learn in addition that concerning me a name cannot be properly spoken at all, [me] with whom only being [*to einai*] is connected [*prosesti*].' Note the difference between *to einai* ('being'), used as generic reference, and *ho ōn* ('*the* being'), in principle an individual instance of it—although for Philo the former is in fact a set with just one member: there is only one true being.

In *De somniis* 1.231, immediately after a quotation of the divine statement, an explanatory sentence follows, one that is quite complex. This is already obvious from the differences in the way that it has been translated. According to one rendering, the divine statement is proclaimed 'in order that, from what (*hōn*) about God is not possible for a human to grasp, he may acknowledge (*epignōi*) his existence (*tēn hyparxis*)'.[30] It is especially the free relative clause (introduced by the plural genitive *hōn* of the relative pronoun *hos*) that causes difficulties. The smallest problem is the sense of the preposition *peri*; although followed by an accusative (*theon*, 'God'), it apparently means 'concerning' here. Much more complicated are the relationships between the various words of the relative clause.[31] In the rendering quoted, in the words *mē ontōn*, which go ahead of *peri theon*, the participle *ontōn* is not clearly rendered (has it been contracted with the relative pronoun?), whereas the negative particle *mē* is connected with preceding words, namely, the adverb *dynaton*, 'possible', and the preceding verb, *lambanō*, 'grasp'.[32] A translation of Philo's book provides a better solution: 'since there are not in God things which man can comprehend, man may recognize His subsistence.'[33] A similar rendering of the relative clause is found in another translation: 'since there are no aspects in God

30. Thus Kweta, *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen*, 365: 'damit von dem, was über Gott dem Menschen nicht zu erfassen möglich ist, er die Existenz einsehe.'

31. The edition of Paulus Wendland mentions *adynaton* as an alternative reading for *dynaton*. See Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, III (Berlin: Reimer, 1898), p. 254 (note). Erwin R. Goodenough goes further in his emendation: 'that he might recognize the existence of the things which it is impossible for a man who is not (*mē onti*) with God to apprehend'. See Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo, 1969), p. 202 note.

32. Cf. the alternative translation that Kweta gives: 'damit der Mensch, wovon ihm unmöglich ist (etwas) zu erkennen, indem es nicht in Beziehung auf Gott (da) ist, das Vorhandensein begreife.' See Kweta, *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen*, p. 682 n. 189. Note the double negation in this rendering!

33. Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*, V, p. 419.

that man can understand'.[34] A rather striking difference between these renderings and the one first mentioned is that the relative clause is obviously connected with *ontōn* ('things' or 'aspects' in the translations concerned). This apparently takes into account the syntactical rule that a genitive (here in the form of a relative clause) may precede the noun of which it limits the meaning, especially to make this genitive more prominent.[35] In these translations the highlighting effect of the clause is indicated by the introduction 'there are. . . .' In both cases *ontōn* is understood together with *peri theon* as referring to something positive: 'things about God' (although the access to them is denied). These 'things' could point to his essence. In this way, in the sentence the opposition is found between God's existence, which is accessible to us, and his essence, which is unknowable in its totality, an opposition known from other places in Philo's work.[36] However, from the discussion above about the passage in *De vita Mosis* the word sequence *mē ontōn* should be understood as relating to a single concept, one that concerns false seeming and misunderstanding. Also in this case the context argues for such an interpretation. The quotation of the divine statement occurs in connection with a discussion of Gen. 31.13 (LXX): 'I am the God who has appeared to you in the place of God.' According to Philo, God contrasts himself, as he is, with the way in which he appears, which is an adaptation to the comprehension of the person concerned (the patriarch Jacob).[37] In this context it is preferable to consider both *hōn* and *mē ontōn* as genitives of separation, therefore indicating in both cases the point from which one moves away. The second genitive functions then as an (explicative) apposition to the first. The sentence can now be rendered as follows: 'in order that, departing from what a human can grasp, departing from what is not/what is false (*mē ontōn*) in relation to God, one may acknowledge his existence'. Philo states here that only by breaking away from sense perception—which is, to him, false seeming—people can come to the recognition

34. See Pierre Savinel in Philon d'Alexandrie, *De Somniis* (Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie, 19; Paris: Cerf, 1962), p. 119: 'afin que, du moment qu'il n'y a pas en Dieu d'aspects que l'homme puisse comprendre, l'homme puisse du moins connaître Son existence.'

35. Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (rev. by G.M. Messing; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), sec. 1161.

36. See *Post* 168-69; *Deus* 62; *Spec* 1.32-44; *Virt* 215; *Praem* 39 (by effort one comes to see 'that he is, not what he is'), 44; cf. *Post* 15. The passages concerned show that the distinction is not always expressed by *ousia*, 'essence', and *hyparxis*, 'existence'. Presumably, Philo is, nevertheless, the first author to express the distinction in these technical terms. See John Glucker, 'The Origin of *hyparkhō* and *hyparksis* as Philosophical Terms', in F. Romano and D.P. Taormina (eds.), *Hyparxis e Hypostasis nel neoplatonismo* (cong.; Florence: Olschki, 1994), pp. 1-23, esp. 19-20.

37. See besides *Somn* 1.227-30 also 238 and 241.

of God's existence. In fact, a similar line of thought is also found elsewhere in his work.[38]

In connection with this outline of Philo's remark, one specification may be relevant. At first glance, it may be expected that inasmuch as people break with the distortions of an appearance this will lead to knowledge of the essence of God. However, this is not stated; instead, the text speaks about knowledge of God's existence. Seen in this way, the opposition between God's essence and existence is not put at the forefront, like the previous interpretation suggested, but it may be considered a kind of subtext.[39]

It is noteworthy that Philo's exegesis of the divine statement in *De somniis* shows a double aspect. In his introduction to it, he underlines the idea that (translated as literally as possible) 'to-be-said, he is not [so] qua nature (*pephyken*) but only to be the being (*to on*)'. Subsequently, however, he infers from the divine statement an affirmation of God's existence. In this exegesis Philo seems therefore to exploit different (fundamentally linguistic; see next section) features of the being of *ho ōn*—the non-copulative use, as true being and as mere existence.

Finally, in *Quod deterius* 160 Philo quotes the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a in the context of an allegorical reading (the distinction between God's tent and that of Moses on the basis of Exod. 33.7). He notes that 'only God subsists (*hyphestēken*) in being (*to einai*)', while 'those who are (*tōn . . . ontōn*) after him (*met' auton*) are not according to being (*kata to einai*), but only in appearance (*doxēi*) are they considered (*nomizomenos*) to subsist (*hyphestanai*).' For the interpretation of this passage there are two clues. The first is the use of the verb *hyphistēmi*. This is not a technical term but has nevertheless a Stoic flavour. If used intransitively, it means basically becoming manifest and showing firmness.[40] The other clue is the accusative use of the preposition *meta* in relation to God. This connection is found

38. See esp. *Praem* 40-44 (he speaks first [in 40] about several shortcomings in the comprehension of the existence of God but subsequently about those who taking the path 'from below to above' conclude to the existence of a 'demiurge' from his works [43] and then about those to whom it is revealed); *Virt* 214-15 (about the migration of Abraham; he speaks in 214 of passing from 'false opinion to truth'). The intellect seems to play an important role in this respect. See besides *Praem* 43 also *Post* 168; *Deus* 62.

39. For a clear expression of this opposition in the context mentioned, see *Post* 168-69; *Praem* 44; *Virt* 215.

40. See Heinrich Dörrie, 'Hypostasis: Wort- und Bedeutungsgeschichte' (orig. 1955), in Dörrie, *Platonica Minora* (Munich: Fink, 1976), pp. 12-69, esp. 20, 26, 28; esp. for Philo: 39, 43, cf. 31. See also the passages mentioned in Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth and Ronald Skarsten, *The Philo Index* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), s.v., p. 348; e.g. *Spec* 1.26 (about idols 'as seeming to subsist while not subsisting').

in several passages in the work of Philo.[41] It usually signifies the secondary place in time and rank of creatures, especially human ones.[42] It often occurs in an interpretation of Exod. 33.23 (therefore a text in the neighbourhood of 33.7): 'You will see my hind parts (*ta opisō*), but, my face will not be seen by you.'[43] In his interpretation Philo renders the preposition *opisō* with *meta*, which makes it more easy for him to interpret the text not spatially (as 'behind') but temporally and hierarchically (as 'after' and 'below', respectively).[44] Interestingly, two passages in *De mutatione* with *meta* in this sense are connected with the designation of God as *to on*. In paragraph 57 the text reads: 'he agreed in relation to *to on* that he was in truth the only one being stable, while what is after [*meta*] him is susceptible to twists and changes of every kind'; according to paragraph 87 one 'should agree that nothing after (*meta*) *to on* is unshakable and unwavering, a cause of firmness'. Therefore Philo apparently says in *Quod deterius* 160 that only God has being inasmuch as only his being is stable and lasting, whereas that of people is passing, without ground in itself, and as such deficient.[45]

Whereas in the previous passages being had more or less an ontological dimension (truth, existence), in the present passage being in this sense involves a theoretical conception about a higher, more essential reality hiding behind the phenomenal world. In relation to this passage we may therefore rightly speak of a metaphysical conception.

2. *Syntactical Approaches*

a. *The Syntax of Exodus 3.14 (LXX)*

After this first excursus into the reception history of the Septuagint rendering of Exod. 3.14a, let us now examine the text of the rendering itself.

Ho Ōn *as a Participle Form.* In the translation of the divine statement, the verb *einai* is employed twice, first as copula (*eimi*, 'am'), second as a nominally used participle (*ōn*, 'being'). As indicated in the introduction to

41. See *Leg* 3.78,126; *Sacr* 92; *Post* 169; *Plant* 64; *Ebr* 107; *Migr* 183; *Congr* 133; *Fug* 51; 164; 165; *Mut* 8-9; 57; 87; *Somn* 1.70; *Spec* 2.235.

42. Only in *Spec* 2.235 (honour parents after God) does it primarily have an ethical sense.

43. For renderings of the Septuagint in this chapter I have profited from the translation in A. Pietersma and B.G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); the translation of Exodus was done by Larry J. Perkins.

44. See *Post* 169; *Fug* 165; *Mut* 8-10 (just before the discussion of Exod. 3.14, treated above in the main text).

45. Kweta speaks of a 'relative Seinsdeficienz'. See *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen*, esp. pp. 373-74.

this chapter, it is commonly thought that the meaning of the participle is determined by philosophical usage. This view, however, is not self-evident, if only for grammatical reasons. The form *ōn* belongs to the masculine gender, something confirmed by the article *ho*. In that, it differs from *(to) on* of Greek philosophy, which is gender neutral. If the translation of Exod. 3.14 were inspired by Plato, even in that case it would therefore remain reminiscent of the personal nature of the god of Israel.[46]

It may not be superfluous to note that a literal translation of *ho ōn* in the context of Exod. 3.14, thus as 'I am the being', may push our thinking in only one direction. To my knowledge, the nominal use of the participle of being is rather restricted in ordinary English. It is then virtually always accompanied by adjectives (as in 'a human being'). Apart from that it has a heavily philosophical meaning. By contrast, in standard Classical Greek the articular use of the participle of being is, although not very frequent, certainly not exceptional.[47] This is even the case in the translation of the Septuagint. For instance, Gen. 39.14 reads: 'she [the wife of Potiphar] called those who were (*tous ontas*) in the house.'[48]

Linguistically, the question whether the participle *ōn* in Exod. 3.14a has a philosophical meaning corresponds to the question whether it is a 'frozen substantive'[49]—in other words, whether it has been reduced to a noun or kept its verbal force. In any case, we should not confine ourselves too quickly to only one option but instead take all possible interpretations into consideration. With a view to this, first the possibilities of standard usage are considered and only at a later stage the possibility of a particular, philosophical use.[50]

46. Thus Starobinski-Safran, 'Exode 3,14 chez Philon', p. 48 ('. . . d'autant plus qu'il est précédé de *egō*'); David Runia, review of J. Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem:* Timaeus *and* Genesis *in Counterpoint*, 1997, in *Studia Philonica Annual* 12 (2000), pp. 218-22, esp. 221 ('The Septuagint personalizes Plato's concept of Being, when God reveals himself as *egō eimi ho ōn* in Ex. 3:14'). This personal aspect of the designation may play a part in Philo inasmuch as in his work the accusative of *ho ōn* is rather often connected with a turning of people to God or away from him (*Leg* 1.82; *Det* 92 *Post* 16; and *Leg* 3.37; *Det* 163, respectively), or, in a few cases, with their fear or love of him (*Post* 69; *Deus* 69). Cf. Charles T. Fritsch, *The Anti-Anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch* (POT, 10; diss.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1943), pp. 22-23, 64.

47. Cf. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 453-57; for absolute uses in the Septuagint, see below.

48. Other instances in the Pentateuch with an adverbial predicate are found in Gen. 44.1; Deut. 4.17; one with a possessive pronoun in Num. 16.5.

49. For this concept, see Paul Stuart Karleen, *The Syntax of the Participle in the New Testament* (diss.; University of Pennsylvania, 1980; Ann Arbor: University Micofilms International, 1982), pp. 100-102.

50. Cf. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 453-57 (*to on*), esp. 453-54.

Ho Ōn *and the Function of the Verb* Einai. Often a basic distinction is made between the copulative use of *einai*, which would be devoid of meaning, and its existential use. Philo's aforementioned differentiation between being said (to be something) and being as such is similar to this distinction. However, this dichotomy confuses syntactical and semantic criteria.[51] In fact, the non-copulative use has different nuances that correspond to different constructions, and the copulative use may also have these nuances more or less.

A copulative function of *ōn* in Exod. 3.14 is improbable because the context does not imply a predicate. It is improbable, for instance, that it is a direct continuation of *esomai meta sou*, 'I will be with you', of v. 12, if only because of the use of the future tense there. Consequently, we can restrict ourselves to the absolute uses of *einai* (so without predicate). One possibility, then, is the vital use.[52] In that case one or more persons are involved as subjects, and the verb has the meaning of 'being alive', which is related to the meaning of the copula as 'is present', 'is on hand', 'is effectively (there)'.[53] It contrasts with being dead or lifeless. Applied to God, it would indicate that he 'is effectively there, makes his presence felt in the world'.[54] When *ōn* is used absolutely elsewhere in the Septuagint (but then without article), it always has this sense.[55] Another possibility for *einai* is the existential use. The notion of existence contrasts with being only in imagination. The question is then whether the person or thing concerned has an extralinguistic reference and—by implication—whether something meaningful can be said about this person or thing. Since saying something meaningful about a subject belongs to primary usage, we can suppose reasonably that we are dealing here with a derived (second order) use.[56] It is significant in

51. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, p. 80; cf. p. 4.

52. See Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 240-45.

53. The glosses of Kahn that explain the development from a locative-copulative use of *einai* to its vital use (*Verb 'Be'*, p. 375) are also mentioned here because in this way the difference with the verb *zōein*, 'live', becomes clearer.

54. Thus Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, p. 306 note, as a possible interpretation of the adjectival use of a participle of being in an Indo-Iranian phrase in relation to the gods (the plural used there has been adapted). The elucidation on p. 376 note will also be relevant here: 'a presence which manifests itself in the capacity to act or to be acted upon'. Although Kahn does not give instances of the vital use of the articular participle, nothing seems to exclude such a use from a syntactical point of view.

55. Always with a negative particle: Isa. 41.12 (*ouk ōn*//perishing, v. 11); Job 10.19 (*ouk ōn*//dying off before being borne, v. 18); Sir 17.28 (*mēde ontos*, concerning a dead one). Passages left out of consideration here are those in which *ōn* is derived from Exod. 3.14 LXX (see sec. 5 below).

56. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 317-19: he considers in particular the possibility of a derivation of this use from the locative-copulative use by omitting or generalizing the locative specification: 'There are gods in . . .' > 'There are gods here, there or somewhere';

this connection that this use appears only as a later development, with the emergence of theological scepticism (the question whether 'there are gods or not') and philosophical speculation.[57] When referring to existence as the only thing one can know about God, Philo apparently tries to counter such doubts! Still another possibility is the veridical use, which points to the truth of a statement.[58] In this function the verb *einai* states as present in the world a descriptive content (in the context of saying, thinking or perceiving) that has been expressed in language just before (e.g. 'It *is* as you say', referring to what has been said). The notion of truth contrasts with that of seeming. The form of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14 does not agree with this understanding, if only because it does not consist of an impersonal proposition. However, this does not prevent someone like Philo from interpreting the statement in this sense, as is obvious when he opposes being to saying or when he relates it to teaching the difference between what is and what is not.[59] The last cases show, at the same time, that the notion of truth is closely connected with that of existence.[60]

It should be noted in addition that the basis of the metaphysical use of the participle is, besides the static nature of *einai* (more about that at the beginning of the next subsection), a combination of the existential use of *einai* and the veridical use.[61] Philo shows this in an exemplary way when he speaks about God as the only one who is truly Being.

Type of Sentence. Another point of interest concerns the nature of the sentence. The sequence that we find in Exod. 3.14, that of personal pronoun + form of *einai* + article + participle, is certainly not a unique phenomenon.[62] This word order often occurs elsewhere in the Septuagint (possibly with a name instead of a pronoun). In a few cases the participle is used absolutely (Isa. 52.6; Job 19.6; 32.7, 8; 1 Chron. 21.17). This sequence can function in two ways in Biblical Greek. We have already met the distinction between

but suspects that the derivation from 'type IV', such as 'There are gods who . . .', by omitting the relative clause, is more probable.

57. See Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, 296-323, esp. 303-6. For the articular participle, see p. 455.

58. See Kahn, *Verb 'Be '*, 333-37; for the participle, see p. 455.

59. Also Kahn suggests that a sentence with *einai* in relation to a person may sometimes have a veridical aspect. See his analysis of *gnōnai ton eonta*, 'recognize who he is' (*Verb 'Be'*, 351 note).

60. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 305-6; and further his 'Introduction (2003)', p. xix; cf. xvi.

61. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, p. 457.

62. Cf. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 142-44; Lane C. McGaughy, *Toward a Descriptive Analysis of einai as a Linking Verb in New Testament Greek* (SBLDiss, 6; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), pp. 78-80.

them in Chapter 2, in the context of the discussion of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14 in Biblical Hebrew (see Chapter 2, sec. 6b, last part).

According to the Septuagint translation of 1 Chron. 21.17, King David says by means of such a sentence: 'It is *I* who have sinned (*ho hamartōn*)!' In this way, David indicates that he and no other is the guilty one (this in agreement with the Hebrew text; see Chapter 2, sec. 6b). In line with this, the rendering of Exod. 3.14 could also be understood as specificationally identifying: 'It is I who am.' In some sense God would then claim (all) being for himself. It is obvious that this way of interpretation plays a big part in Philo's treatment in *Quod deterius*. This interpretation is, however, problematic within the context of Exodus because the narrative did not previously refer to being itself, as such an interpretation presupposes. The other texts of Philo dealing with Exod. 3.14 manifest a different interpretation. That way of interpreting Exod. 3.14 can also be related to a function that the sequence under discussion may have. This function is illustrated by 1 Kgdms (Sam.) 4.16. Before, what happens has been depicted from the perspective of the blind high priest Eli: he has heard tumult in town and asks himself what it means. The messenger of doom introduces himself through the words: 'I am the one who has come (*ho hēkōn*) from the ranks.'[63] In all probability the messenger does not contrast himself with other people ('It is I who am coming from there—not they'), but rather gives in a prominent way information about himself, information that is not known. In line with this sentence we can understand Exod. 3.14a as descriptionally identifying: 'I am he who *is*.'[64] What this might mean becomes clearer if, for instance, we interpret 'is' in the sense of 'is there' or 'exists', and make the sense of the sentence construction explicit by adding a word such as 'effectively' or 'really' in the rendering of v. 14a: 'I am the one who is really there.'[65]

If the sentence were an instance of specification, the use of the personal pronoun *egō* would in all probability be a syntactic necessity. It is then needed to support the claim to exclusivity (what is said applies only to me and not to another). In the case of a self-description, the pronoun is in principle unnecessary, but it may nevertheless be used to mark the subject more prominently for one reason or another. In all probability, the rendering of Exod. 3.14 wants to designate the subject explicitly as the topic of the sentence: the subject reveals here his identity (similarly 3.6; cf. 20.2,

63. In this case the Hebrew source text is similar: *'ānōkî* + article + participle.

64. Cf. Alviero Niccacci, 'Marked Syntactical Structures in Biblical Greek in Comparison with Biblical Hebrew', *LASBF* 43 (1993), pp. 9-69, esp. 45 note. He distinguishes between the *egō eimi* of 'self-presentation' and that of 'self-vindication'.

65. Cf. *Det* 161, where Philo adds *ontōs* to *to on* in close connection with his discussion of Exod. 3.14 (160); cf. also *Mut* 11 (*tōi onti pros alētheian*).

underlining of identity).[66] By doing so, the rendering of Exod. 3.14a also suggests a change of viewpoint, from Moses and the Israelites (3.13) to that of God.

Ho Ōn *a Proper Name?* A remaining question is whether *ho ōn* can be understood as a direct answer to the question in v. 13, thus as a personal name. This is sometimes explicitly denied.[67] As indicated above, Philo's position is ambiguous in this respect. It may be mentioned in passing that in the first chapter of Exodus, *ōn* already functions, rather accidentally, as a proper name, namely, as the Greek transliteration of an Egyptian place name, which is subsequently (in a LXX plus) identified more closely as Heliopolis (1.11). In connection with Exod. 3.14, it could be noted from a linguistic point of view that proper names ending with *-ōn* are often derived from an adjective or a noun (e.g. Agathon from *agathos*; Philo [*Philōn*] from *philos*); the ending *-ōn* serves then as an individualizing element.[68] What is more relevant to us, however, is that a Greek participle can also be used as a proper name.[69] Against an interpretation of *ōn* in this sense it might be adduced that it has an article. However, it is not unusual in Greek that an article is used before a name. This is, for instance, the case when the person concerned has already been introduced and there is a need to link the

66. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), pp. 322, 323 (about 'subject focus'); Hélène Perdicoyianni-Paléologou, 'The Semantico-Referential Function of the Personal Pronouns in Euripides and Seneca's Plays', *Gerión* 23, no. 1 (2005), pp. 205-18, esp. 206 (the 'PPS of identity'); also Perdicoyianni-Paléologou, 'Étude pragmatique des pronoms personnels dans le Nouveau Testament', *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 47.2 (2005), pp. 305-20, esp. 306-7. Cf. further Jean-Christophe Pitavy, 'Au sujet du pronom sujet: *egō* et la liberté du locuteur en grec', in Eric Perrin-Saminadayar *et al.* (eds.), *En koinōniāï pasa philia* (Festschrift B. Jacquinod; Saint-Étienne: Centre Jean Palerne, 2006), pp. 227-42 (the most analytical study, but unfortunately not analyzing copulative sentences similar to Exod. 3.14a).

67. C.H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), p. 4: 'By merely eliminating the name of God the LXX contributed to the definition of monotheism. . . . The meaning of this [Exod. 3.14] is that God has no individual name: He is simply "the Self-existent".'

68. Ernst Fraenkel, s.v. 'Namenwesen', in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, XVI/2 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1935), cols. 1611-70, esp. 1632-33; Christine Frei-Lüthy, *Der Einfluss der griechischen Personennamen auf die Wortbildung* (diss.; Heidelberg: Winter, 1978), pp. 76-79.

69. See Adolf Wilhelm, 'Vermuthungen', *Philologus* 60 (1901), pp. 481-90, esp. 485-87; Louis Robert, 'Deux inscriptions d'Iasos' (orig. 1957), in Robert, *Opera minora selecta: Epigraphie et antiquités grecques*, III (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1969), pp. 1478-92, esp. 1489 (note).

new mention explicitly with the earlier one.[70] These considerations make it likely that Philo's interpretation of *ho ōn* as a name is based on Exod. 3.14b. In this part of the verse *ho ōn* is the subject of a sentence ('*ho ōn* has sent me to you') and resumes its occurrence in 3.14a, in which it functions as predicate within a self-presentation. It should be noted, however, that this understanding of *ho ōn* as a proper name is not necessary.

b. *Differences in Syntax between Greek and Hebrew*

In the previous subsection the text of the rendering was viewed in itself. It appeared that from a linguistic point of view the Septuagint translation of Exod. 3.14a can be interpreted in different ways. The next step should be a consideration of the rendering in relation to the Hebrew original.

The Use of einai *versus That of* hyh. The sentence *egō eimi ho ōn* translates *'ehye 'ašer 'ehye*. The two verbs concerned, *einai* and *hyh*, have a different scope, as is already obvious from the translation of the book of Exodus. Verb forms of *einai* are also used in the renderings of verbless clauses (e.g. 20.17), for those with the locative–existential particles *yēš* (17.7) or *'ēyn* (the last one having a negative sense; e.g., 8.6/10),[71] and in the translation of rhetorical *hᵃlô'*-questions (with a veridical nature; see, e.g., 33.16; rendered adequately there into Greek with *alēthōs*, 'truly'!). Generally speaking, the Greek verb *einai* refers to a state, something underlined by the fact that this verb has only present and imperfect forms (with an imperfective aspect) but not aorist forms (with a perfective aspect).[72] By contrast, *hyh* links the subject to some predicate but in itself it does not indicate whether it concerns a state or the arrival of that state (see Chapter 2, sec. 6b, first excursus in small

70. See F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (trans. and ed. R.W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), sec. 260; but also the more detailed study of Stephen H. Levinsohn, 'The Definite Article with Proper Names for Referring to People in the Greek of Acts' (found online), *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session* 35 (1991), pp. 91-102, esp. 93-94 ('The unmarked patterns'). This use of the article in relation to proper names falls under the anaphoric type of use. See also the excursus of sec. 3d below.

71. To maintain a similar numbering system as has been applied to biblical verses in the previous chapters, the first number will indicate the verse number for the Hebrew, Masoretic text; the next number, the verse number in the Septuagint text verse (and mostly also in vernacular translations).

72. Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, pp. 194-98, 219, 233. The distinction imperfective and perfective replaces the traditional one in Greek grammar of durative and punctiliar. About aspect in Greek, see, e.g., T.V. Evans, *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch: Natural Greek Usage and Hebrew Interference* (orig. diss.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Chapter 2, esp. pp. 14-26; see also 222-23 for the imperfective aspect of *eimi*. For aspect, see also Chapter 2, sec. 6e, middle part, for Hebrew.

letters). In the latter case Greek does not use *einai* but other verbs, in particular *gignesthai*, 'become' (see, e.g., the rendering of *hyh* in Exod. 4.3, 4).

As regards Exod. 3.14a, some authors make much of the difference between *einai* and *hyh*. In this case, however, they compare the use of *einai* in the philosophical domain with the standard use of *hyh* (a category mistake),[73] or they attribute, particularly on the basis of its translational equivalents (the translational fallacy; see also Chapter 2, sec. 6b, first excursus in small letters), a dynamic meaning (such as 'happening', 'being active') to *hyh* as such, and contrast this subsequently with the stative nature of *einai*.[74]

The contrast between the Greek and the Hebrew text could also be supported by pointing to a difference in tense. The finite verb form *eimi* and also the participle *ōn* are obviously present-tense forms. However, the preformative form of the verb *hyh* (*'ehye*) usually refers to the future. In fact, the main function of the verb *hyh* is to indicate tense and modality. Nevertheless, the difficulty is not entirely insurmountable because the preformative form may also serve as a general present (see Chapter 2, sec. 6e, middle part).

The Sentence Level. Although there are differences between the uses of the words and the functions of the conjugations concerned, in my view the main difference between source and translation texts is not a matter of word meanings or verbal function but of sentence construction.[75] Let us analyze the nature of this difference more closely.

73. See J.A. Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name* (Tyndale OT Lecture; London: Tyndale Press, 1959), p. 21 (he says that *hyh* is not '"to be essentially" because the verb properly means "to be phenomenally", corresponding to the Greek *ginesthai*, and not *einai*. Metaphysics is not involved', while referring to A.B. Davidson, 1904); cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, 'The Name of the God of Moses', *HUCA* 32 (1961), pp. 121-33, esp. 127 (the being of Exod. 3.14 MT 'is not the abstract Greek *einai*, the mere existence *per se*').

74. See esp. the epilogue of Thorleif Boman, *Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 5th edn, 1968), pp. 194-213, titled 'Sprache und Denken' (a defence of his book against James Barr's criticism in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* [1961], esp. p. 199. Boman's treatment of the verb *hyh* (see also pp. 27-37, 207) leans considerably on that of Ratschow's *Werden und Wirken* (see Chapter 2, n. 162). Cf., earlier, S.R. Driver, 'Recent Theories on the Origin and Nature of the Tetragrammaton', in *Studia biblica*, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), pp. 1-20, esp. 15 ('*hyh* is *gignomai*, not *eimi*').

75. The remark in the NTT-version of this chapter (see n. 6 above) that 'in a concrete case *einai* can therefore get a more dynamic content' (p. 4) will not be repeated here: such a remark confuses the meaning of *einai* with that of the sentence (a semantic fallacy). Accordingly, the conclusions of this chapter will also be somewhat different in this respect.

An initial step may be the observation that the relative clause in the Hebrew text has been translated in Greek by an articular participle. This has also been done elsewhere in Exodus, be it only in a minority of the cases. For instance, (as a substantival participle) in 20.7: 'for *Kyrios* (the Lord) does not hold [to be] pure the one who takes up (*ton lambanonta*) his name in futility'; and (as an attributive participle) in 25.21/22: 'I shall speak to you from above the propitiatory in the midst of the Cherubim that are (*tōn ontōn*) on the ark of testimony' (in this way also 30.6). It may be noted that in standard Greek usage the articular participle is virtually equivalent to a headless relative clause.[76] As a consequence, *ho ōn* corresponds to *hos estin*, '(the one) who is'. Of course, the choice of one of these alternatives may be determined by particular reasons, for instance stylistic ones. This is a general remark that we should take into account in more specific discussions.

A further step may be taken on the basis of the conclusion in the previous section that the divine statement in the Greek translation can be understood as descriptionally or, possibly too, specificationally identifying. This conclusion implies that the statement has a definite content in the translation (type: 'I am *the* x'). This contrasts, however, with the Hebrew source text, in which the idem per idem construction results in an indefinite sense of the statement (type: 'I am who*ever* I am'). How can this difference between source and translation texts be explained? From a syntactical point of view, there are two possibilities.

The Congruence Interpretation. According to one view, the translator conceived the sentence structure of Exod. 3.14a as a matter of congruence,[77] in a way similar to that of, for instance, 1 Chron. 21.17 (the Hebrew text reads, literally translated, 'I [am] he who *have* sinned'). In that case the grammatical person of the second *'ehye* would be dictated by that of the first *'ehye*. Literally translated, the statement in Exod. 3.14a runs then as follows: 'I

76. See the formulaic representation of the transformations involved in Karleen, *Syntax of the Participle*, p. 96. See also Robert W. Funk, *A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek*, II. *Syntax* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 2nd edn, 1977), secs. 672 (in relation to adjectival use), 773; Kahn, *Verb 'Be'*, 453 (in connection with *ōn* as an adjective); cf. pp. 454-55. Compare Deut. 5.6 and Judg. 6.8 A (participle) with Exod. 20.2 and Judg. 6.8 B (relative clause), respectively.

77. Thus, e.g., Roland de Vaux, 'The Revelation of the Divine Name', in J. I. Durham and J.R. Porter (eds.), *Proclamation and Presence* (Festschrift G.H. Davies; London: SCM, 1970), pp. 48-75, esp. 69 (suggesting that this interpretation is also rather probable for the Hebrew text); Miguel Ángel Pertini, 'Apuntes para la exégesis y la teología de LXX Ex 3,14', *Estudios bíblicos* 63 (2005), pp. 147-73, esp. 159-64, 170 (very ample, also defending it as a faithful interpretation of the Hebrew original). See further Chapter 2, sec. 6b, middle part.

am who *am*', of which the relative clause should be rendered more idiomatically in English as 'who is.' However, the translator did not render the Hebrew text by the relative clause *hos estin*, 'who is', but by its virtual equivalent, the articular participle *ho ōn*, 'the (one) being' (in the same way 1 Chron. 21.17 was later dealt with).

This explanation of the rendering of Exod. 3.14 cannot be taken for granted. The only other instance of such a congruence in Exodus concerns the introduction of the Decalogue, rendered with: 'I am *Kyrios* your god who (has) brought you out of the land of Egypt' (20.2). The Greek translation has rendered the Hebrew first-person form in the relative clause (*hôṣē'tî-*; see Chapter 2, sec. 6b, middle part) with a third-person form, *exēgagon*, 'has brought out'. However, in this case it is hardly possible to understand the verb form differently, and therefore the translation may simply be based on inference. By contrast, such a conjecture is improbable in the case of Exod. 3.14a because the context is not so pressing. In that case it could only be based on an abstract knowledge of the congruence rule in question. If, however, such an excellent knowledge of Hebrew by the translator is assumed, why then could he not recognize the idem per idem construction, an interpretation that is much more likely in Hebrew (see Chapter 2, sec. 6c—second last part)? Moreover, if we may indeed assume that Greek was the daily language of the translator as is supposed,[78] this possibility is even more likely since the idem per idem construction is native to Greek, whereas this is not the case for congruent predicative relative clauses. This remark about the idem per idem construction anticipates the conclusions arrived at in the discussion of the next view.

The Idem per Idem Interpretation. According to another view, the translator understood the construction in Hebrew but did not translate it literally into Greek because that would produce an absurd tautology.[79] It may indeed be stated that the translator of Exodus strove in general for a faithful translation but also one that would be in grammatically correct and idiomatic

78. John William Wevers, 'Two Reflections on the Greek Exodus', in J.H. Ellens *et al.* (eds.), *God's Word for our World,* I (Festschrift S.J. De Vries; JSOTSup 388; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 21-37, esp. 29-30 (in particular: 'the Alexandrian Jew [thus also the Exodus translator] spoke Hellenistic Greek fluently'); cf. Anneli Aejmelaeus, 'What Can We Know about the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint' (orig. 1987), in Aejmelaeus, *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators: Collected Essays* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), pp. 77-115, esp. 94 ('the one who of all the Pentateuchal translators paid most attention to the requirements of Greek language').

79. See Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 33 (note). He contrasts the LXX-translation with that of Aquila and of Theodotion, well known for their literalism. In fact, however, his starting-point is an emended text of their renderings of Exod. 3.14a. See at n. 92 below.

Greek.[80] However, the idea that a literal translation would sound nonsensical is doubtful because such idem per idem sentences regularly occur in Classical Greek. There are even several cases known with the verb 'to be'. The functions of the idem per idem construction in Greek differ, however, from those in Hebrew (for the latter, see Chapter 2, sec. 6c).

The idem per idem construction is not distinguished as such in syntactical or rhetorical studies of Greek, but we often find more or less systematized remarks about examples of it in literature.[81] As regards its function, the views vary. Here only some tentative remarks about this construction and its effect can be made. Among the many instances in Classical Greek mentioned in the literature, all of them belong to the posterior type (with a free relative after the main clause), and not even one to the anterior type (with a free relative before the main clause) (*Antiphon*, 4.δ.6, 'what he has undergone, he has undergone involuntarily', is not a real example because of the modification of the second clause by an adverb). As for Koine Greek, most instances of the anterior type in the Hebrew Bible, namely, Gen. 43.14; Exod. 16.23; Jer. 15.2; 43.11; Jer. 52.19, are translated literally. However, in 2 Kgs / 4 Kgdms 25.15 (in this respect different from Jer. 52.19) the relative clauses are omitted (and therefore only a simple qualification of the golden and silver nature of the objects remains), and in Esth. 4.16 only the sense is rendered: 'If I perish, [so] be it.' When Pilate says in the Gospel of John 'What I have written I have written' (*ho gegrapha, gegrapha*; 19.22), it may show a Semitic influence (although Latin influence would theoretically also be possible; see Chapter 5, sec. 2).

What is most important to us is that the instances of the posterior type in Classical Greek can be subdivided in three groups according to their cognitive effect.[82]

80. See Bénédicte Lemmelijn, 'Free and yet Faithful. On the Translation Technique of LXX Exod 7:14–11:10', *JNSL* 33 (2007), pp. 1-32 (with other references). See now also Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the So-Called 'Plagues Narrative' in Exodus 7:14-11:10* (OTS, 56; diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009), pp. 108-50.

81. See Raphael Kühner and Bernhard Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, II,2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1904), sec. 562.1; J.D. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 82; Detlev Fehling, *Die Wiederholungsfiguren und ihr Gebrauch bei den Griechen vor Gorgias* (orig. Habil.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), p. 293; Henry W. Johnstone, 'Pankoinon as a Rhetorical Figure in Greek Tragedy', *Glotta* 58 (1980), pp. 49-62. The most systematic effort is found in the last study. However, Johnstone is quite unaware of the related studies in Semitics and his term, pankoinon, does not cover quite the same phenomenon as idem per idem, since it is also applied to other sentence types such as correlative sentences, e.g., to Euripides, *Hecuba* 1000 (see p. 53).

82. The distinction and its categories are borrowed from T.C. Vriezen, '*'Ehje 'ašer 'ehje*', in W. Baumgartner *et al.* (eds.), *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), pp. 498-512, esp. 501, 503. Although intended for Hebrew, they are in fact based on German, better Dutch; that is on Indo-Germanic languages such as Greek.

This distinction will be illustrated as far as possible with cases with the verb *einai*.[83] In Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, lines 67-68 read: 'However, *it is* where now *it is*, but it will be accomplished according to destiny.' The Chorus does not know how things—understand: the battle with Troy—stand now but expresses confidence that things will finally meet divine indignation about flagrant human violations (cf. lines 126-27).[84] The idem per idem sentence (somewhat atypical because of the presence of *nun*, 'now', in the second clause) expresses therefore a 'general indefiniteness' here. In Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, line 336, Ismene says to Oedipus about her brothers: '*They are* where (*houper*) *they are*, but things are now grim for them.' Ismene knows what her brothers are doing, fighting over the throne of Thebes, but she does not want Oedipus to know this. She therefore tries to dismiss the question of Oedipus as irrelevant by answering only in general, indefinite terms.[85] In Euripides' *Medea*, line 889, Medea says to Jason: 'However, *we are* what/as (*hoion*) *we are*—I will not say [something] bad—[namely] women.' As the parenthetic clause suggests, Medea avoids an exact description, notably an offensive designation.[86] She does not express but will call to mind the current opinion, also that of Jason's (lines 569-75), that women are weak creatures (cf. also lines 415-20). In the last two cases, the speaker knows what is the case but avoids speaking clearly. We can call them instances of 'definite indefiniteness'. In the tragedy of Medea, an idem per idem sentence with quite another sense is found in line 1011: '*You have reported* what (*hoi*) *you have reported*. I will not blame you.' In this case both Medea and the tutor know what the latter has reported; only the impact of his own words on Medea escapes him. This statement expresses resignation,[87] and its effect seems to rest on the repetition of the verb and therefore on an endorsement of what has already been said in the main clause. We can speak of an instance of 'intensive indefiniteness', or better, of 'elative use':[88] the indefinite, general nature of the statement seems only to

83. The most cases with the verb *einai* are noted by C. G. Schütz, *Aeschyli Tragoediae*, II (Halle: Gebauer, 1811), p. 158; cf. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style*, p. 82 (he includes, wrongly, constructions with an appositive relative clause or with a [really] comparative adverbial clause).

84. See George Thomson, *The Oresteia of Aeschylus* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1966), p. 15. About the enigmatic nature of the sentence and its double meaning, see A. Sidgwick, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 6th edn, 1905), Part 2 'Notes', p. 8.

85. Thus approximately Johnstone, 'Pankoinon', pp. 59-60 (see also 50, 51), this observation continuing by saying, 'so she says in effect, "Never mind where they are."'

86. Thus Louis Méridier, *Euripide*, I (Paris: Les belles lettres, 5th edn, 1961), p. 155 note.

87. In this sense, Donald J. Mastronarde distinguishes, rightly, line 1011 from that of 889. See Euripides, *Medea* (ed. D.J. Mastronarde; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 332 note and 315 note, respectively.

88. Vriezen, '*'Ehje' 'ašer 'ehje*', pp. 500-503, distinguishes between 'das intensive-Indefinite' and 'das Indefinite . . . zum Ausdruck des Gesteigerten, des Elativen, des Unabänderlichen oder der Totalität' but does not maintain this distinction in his discussion of examples.

support the endorsement. It appears therefore, that, unlike in Biblical Hebrew, a sentence with a posterior relative clause can also have this function in Classical Greek!

It may finally be mentioned that elsewhere in the Septuagint, the posterior type idem per idem sentences in 1 Sam./Kgdms. 23.13; 2 Sam./Kgdms. 15.20; and 2 Kgs/4 Kgdms 8.1 are literally translated. However, the peculiar cases of Ezek. 12.25 and Hos. 9.14 are rendered by splitting the sentences (the case of Hos. 9.14 is, however, not quite sure: *ti* may also be a relative pronoun), and the comparative sentence of Sir. 44.9 by paraphrase.

The data mentioned suggest that a literal translation of Exod. 3.14a into Greek would be compatible with the use in Hebrew. However, they also indicate that an idem per idem construction in Greek translation could be understood in different ways.

The question may also be raised whether the translator of Exodus recognized idem per idem constructions and how he handled them. The anterior type instance in Exod. 16.23 he renders 'whatever (*hosa*) you would bake (*an* + subjunctive), bake [it], whatever you would boil (*an* + subjunctive), boil [it].' Like in the Hebrew source text, the repetition in the rendering gives the statement the nature of an endorsement. However, the rendering also shows some particularities: the indefinite nature of the relative clause in Hebrew is highlighted by the use of the relative particle *hosa* and further by the use of the modal particle *an* and the subjunctive mode of the verb form. Of the other two posterior type instances, that in 4.13, 'send, please, by the hand you may send', is rendered by 'designate (*procheirisai*) a capable other (*dynamenon allon*), whom you will send.' The rendering consists of a paraphrase, but this paraphrase must be a product of study: the first verb *procheirizō* seems to be inspired by the word 'hand' in the source text (*yad* in Hebrew, *cheir* in Greek), and the association that this word has with capability, an association facilitated by the contents of the previous verses (vv. 10-12). The notion of capability of the one who is to be designated contrasts in fact with Moses' self-description in v. 10: 'I am not competent (*hikanos*)'.[89] The indefiniteness of the request is therefore reduced from sending somebody whoever he may be to designating some capable, other person, who (apparently we deal now with a non-restrictive clause!) subsequently is sent (both cases, however, imply the undoing of Moses' own sending). This shift does not show a clear misunderstanding of the idem per idem construction of the sentence but seems to be primarily based on the wish to clarify the request. In Exod. 33.19 the idem per idem sentences are faithfully rendered: 'I shall show mercy to whom (*hon*) I will show mercy (*an* + subjunctive), and shall have compassion for whom (*hon*) I will have compassion (*an* + subjunctive).' The use of the subjunctive and the modal

89. See Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 48.

particle *an* in the relative clauses indicates that these clauses do not refer to a fixed series of persons but to an open set of possible persons, since they leave open who exactly is concerned (apart from Moses).[90,91] If this was the work of the same translator as in Exod. 3.14 (about this issue see the introduction of sec. 3), then at least in this case this translator understood clearly the sense of an idem per idem sentence.

Because of the way Exod. 3.14 has been translated, the original idem per idem sentence cannot have been connected with an indefinite effect. However, there is an alternative: it can also have been associated with the function of intensification. The translations of Aquila and Theodotion might also point to an understanding in this sense: *esomai esomai*, 'I shall be I shall be.'[92] For Hebrew, there is no evidence that the sentence type in question would have an emphatic meaning (see Chapter 2, sec. 6c). On the other hand, such an interpretation can be based on Greek usage. An indication for such a use of the construction was already found in Classical Greek (see smaller type above, example of Medea 1011). Such a use is also illustrated in Koine Greek by 1 Cor. 15.10. The sentence concerned, 'I am (*eimi*) what (*ho*) I am', constitutes a turning point (indicated by *de*, 'but') in Paul's train of thought about his own position.[93] Paul has previously stated that he is 'the

90. About the particle *an*, see Eva-Carin Gerö, 'The Usage of *an* and *ke* in Ancient Greek: Towards a Unified Description', *Glotta* 76 (2000), pp. 177-91, esp. 183 note ('verbs of attitude'), 186-87 (about generic expressions). On p. 188 she proposes that '*an* and *ke* are *reflexes* of the intensionality of the context where they occur'—which is, presumably, the same as saying that they are non-specific indices of (epistemic) modality.

91. See also Paul's indefinite interpretation of Exod. 33.19 in Rom. 9.15.

92. This is put forward as a possibility by Norbert Kilwing, 'Noch einmal zur Syntax von Ex 3,14', *BN* 10 (1979), pp. 70-79, esp. 77 note: the rendering may be an example of epizeuxis, the repetition of a word for emphasis. It is, however, mostly supposed that the relative pronoun got lost during the transmission of the rendering. See Fridericus Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt,* I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875), p. 85 (cod. 64); William R. Arnold, 'The Divine Name in Exodus iii.14', *JBL* 24 (1905), pp. 107-65, esp. 114-15: similarly, but rejecting Field's reference in this connection to the fourteenth-century translation of the Graecus Venetus, *esomai hos esomai*.

93. Its crucial place in Paul's discourse is sometimes noticed. See esp. Wolfgang Schenk, 'Textlinguistische Aspekte der Strukturanalyse, dargestellt am Beispiel von 1 Kor XV.1-11', *New Testament Studies* 23 (1976-77), pp. 469-77, esp. 475. Cf. also Winfried Verburg, *Endzeit und Entschlafenen: Syntaktisch-sigmatische, semantische und pragmatische Analyse von 1 Kor 15* (FB, 78; diss.; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1996), pp. 30-31. Only very rarely is attention paid to the sentence construction and its effect. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, p. 338: 'By using the neuter [the relative pronoun *ho*, not the masculine one—*hos*], Paul is not affirming [!] his person as much as his office of apostleship.' See further G.G. Findlay, 'St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians', in W. Robertson Nicoll (ed.), *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, II (Franeker: Wever, n.d. [1936]), p. 921: God's grace 'makes Paul what he *is* (. . . the double *eimi* is firmly

least of the apostles, unfit to be called apostle, because I have persecuted the community of God'. The initial words 'by the favour of God . . .' clearly gives a positive aspect to the idem per idem sentence. In this context, an emphasis on the indefiniteness of what Paul is would not be appropriate. What is more in accordance with a contrast with the previous negative sentences and the positive initial words would be a strongly positive affirmation of what Paul is at that moment. This interpretation is confirmed by the next sentences, in which Paul states that the grace of God has not been in vain but, on the contrary, has worked abundantly in him

Because of the indigenous nature of idem per idem sentences in Greek and also of the translator's handling of them, it seems probable that the translator recognized the idem per idem nature of the sentence construction of Exod. 3.14. However, in this case he apparently understood its effect not as a matter of indefiniteness but of intensification. Such an understanding by the translator was also facilitated by the fact that in the Hebrew text the idem per idem statement *'ehye 'ašer 'ehye* of v. 14a is simply resumed in v. 14b by *'ehye* in clause-initial position.

The question remains, however, why the translator—if he understood the statement of Exod. 3.14a as an assertive idem per idem statement—rendered it in the rather free way he did. To explain it, we may note that the statement is notoriously difficult to grasp within its context, whereas the translator of Exodus, as is known, just strived for clarity.[94] As we saw, he paraphrased the idem per idem sentence of 4.13 for the same reasons. There is even more reason to clarify the statement of 3.14a because of its fundamental, theological nature.

The Context of the Way of Translating. However, these are only general remarks; we can and should particularize them within the given context. In this connection we have to take into account the difficulties the translator

assertive—"I am what I verily am")." However, the question of what type of sentence construction is involved does not seem to have caught the attention of New Testament studies at all. Strikingly enough, the first one who paid attention to the similarity of the sentence construction with sentences like that of Exod 3.14a was a Jewish scholar: see B[enno] Jacob, 'Mose am Dornbusch', *MGWJ* 66/30 n.s. (1922), pp. 11-33, 116-38, 180-200, esp. 130 note. To my knowledge, he has been followed only by one other Old Testament scholar, see Jack R. Lundbom, 'God's Use of the *Idem per idem* to Terminate Debate', *HTR* 71 (1978), pp. 193-201, esp. 194.

94. See J.W. Wevers, 'Translation and Canonicity: A Study in the Narrative Portions of the Greek Text of Exodus', in H.L.J. Vanstiphout *et al.* (eds.), *Scripta signa vocis* (Festschrift J.H. Hospers; Groningen: Forsten, 1986), pp. 295-303, esp. 296-98; also Wevers, 'How the Greek Exodus Rationalized the Text', in E. Robbins and S. Sandahl (eds.), *Corolla Torontonensis* (Festschrift R.M. Smith; Toronto: TSAR, 1994), pp. 47-57, esp. 49-52, 55-56.

faced in translating the following vv. 14b and 15a. In principle he had to deal with the following conditions:

(1) Certain particularities of what follows the idem per idem statement in the source text:

(a) The first-person verb form *'ehye* functions in the message of v. 14b as the subject of a sentence and consequently as a name.

(b) A sequence of divine designations in v. 15a with Yhwh in front position occupies the same place as *'ehye* in v. 14b in a further identical sentence, and in this connection Yhwh can easily be understood as a third-person reference on the basis of an etymological play.

(2) The fact that the standard rendering of Yhwh was *kyrios*, 'lord', without article.[95] If only for this reason, the etymological play of the source text could not be reproduced.

The translation of *'ehye* by *ho ōn* in v. 14b can be explained as an attempt to avoid the peculiar use of a first-person verb form of *einai* as subject in Greek.[96] It may be noted that also in Greek finite verb forms can be used as personal names, in this case not only third-person but also second- and first-person forms (e.g. *meneis* and *menō*, 'You stay' and 'I stay', respectively). However, the way in which they are written suggests that they are very often accented differently (*me-'nō* instead of *'me-nō*) or pronounced otherwise (*mennei*; cf. third-person form *menei*) than the corresponding verb forms. Even more common are names consisting of a verb stem combined

95. It is sometimes doubted whether this rendering was original, but instead supposed that a form of the tetragram was preserved in the translation, such as the one in old Hebrew characters found in some manuscripts and also witnessed by the Church Fathers Origen and Jerome. See, however, against this supposition Albert Pietersma, 'Kyrios or Tetragram: A Renewed Quest for the Original LXX', in Pietersma and C. Cox (eds.), *De Septuaginta* (Festschrift J.W. Wevers; Mississauga, ON: Benben, 1984), pp. 85-101; Martin Rösel, 'The Reading and Translation of the Divine Name in the Masoretic Tradition and the Greek Pentateuch', *JSOT* 31 (2007), pp. 411-28. On the other hand, Kristin De Troyer supposes that the original rendering of the tetragram was *theos*, because this is found instead of *Kyrios* in some Egyptian LXX papyri and because there is no real consistency in the use of the article before *kyrios*; witness its use in the Psalms, differently from that of *theos* there, which would suggest that the latter is older. See De Troyer, 'The Pronunciation of the Names of God: With Some Notes Regarding *nomina sacra*', in I.U. Dalferth and P. Stoellger (eds.), *Gott Nennen* (RPT, 35; cong.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 143-72, esp. 161. However, the difference mentioned does not prove the originality of *theos*. Moreover, the regularities in the LXX renderings of the divine names in Exodus (see sec. 3d) also speak against her view (cf. Rösel, 'Translation of the Divine Name', esp. p. 424).

96. Thus Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 33.

with a suffix (e.g. *men-os*, *men-ēs*).[97] Nevertheless, although a first-person verb form of *einai* would have a strong analogy in these forms and with the Hebrew original, the translator has apparently preferred a smoother text by employing the articular form of the participle of *einai*, *ho ōn* (cf. *menōn*).

The translation change has, however, another advantage. If in Greek the divine name in v. 15a were parallel to a first-person verb form in v. 14b as in Hebrew, the transition from v. 14b to v. 15a would be far more difficult to grasp than in the latter language. By contrast, with its third-person reference, the use of *ho ōn* in v. 14b offers a good preparation for the introduction of *Kyrios* as a substitute for the divine name.[98] From the point of view of translation (and in contrast with the view of Philo), it is therefore plausible that *ho ōn* in v. 14b serves as a preceding qualification, while *kyrios* in v. 15a, used without article, serves as the proper name asked for. This interpretation implies that in v. 14b the status of *ho ōn* in the Septuagint is different from that of *'ehye* in the Hebrew source text.

Is it indeed probable that, within the conditions given, the translator did everything possible to keep up the connection between v. 14b and v. 15a? Let us look at how he dealt with the etymology of other names. The names Moses (2.10), Gershom (2.22; 18.3), Eliezer (18.4) are transliterated in Greek, and therefore the etymological nature of the explanation of these names gets lost in the translation (see also 16.15, 31 in connection with 'manna'). On the other hand, in 15.23 the name Marah is first transliterated (Merra) but at its second mention translated (as 'Bitterness'); moreover, in 17.7 the names Massah and Meribah are directly translated (as 'Testing' and 'Raillery') and so too the name in 17.15 ('*Kyrios* my refuge'); therefore the explanation of the latter names do not cause problems in Greek. It appears, then, that sometimes the translator made an effort to render the etymological wordplay of the source text in the translation in an intelligible way.

The rendering of *'ehye* in v. 14b by *ho ōn* can therefore be understood both as a stylistic adaptation of the grammatical person to its use as sub-

97. Cf. P.M. Fraser and E. Matthews, *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names,* I-V.A (vols. 1-5.A; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987-2010), the names concerned. For systematic explanatory studies, see esp. Fritz Bechtel and August Fick, *Die griechischen Personennamen nach ihrer Bildung erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd edn, 1894), esp. pp. 15-37; Ina J. Hartmann, '"What Name? What Parentage?": The Classification of Greek Names and the Elean Corpus' (found online), in Hartmann and A. Willi (eds.), *Oxford University Working Papers in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics* 7 (2002), pp. 55-81. Unfortunately, these studies pay little attention to the different verb forms used in the formation of personal names. See Hartmann, 'What Name?', p. 63: only the general category of verb is mentioned.

98. Wevers has an eye only for the continuity between v. 14a and b: '*'ehye* serves both as a relative clause and as subject of a verbal sentence. The only thing that would make sense would be a participle.' See Wevers, 'Two Reflections', p. 31.

ject of a sentence and as a preparation for the introduction of *Kyrios* as a name substitute in v. 15a. In this connection the translation of the relative clause *'ašer 'ehye* by the articular participle *ho ōn* in v. 14a can simply be explained as an adaptation to vv. 14b and 15a. Such an adaptation is in agreement with the translator's handling of the text elsewhere. In other passages he can also change a verb form according to his own judgment.[99] It often concerns a change of number (singular or plural, e.g., in 2.2, 3) or voice (active or passive, e.g., 10.26), but it can also merely involve a change of the grammatical person: 'he will bless your bread' (23.25) becomes as an adaptation to the first-person form of the sentence that follows it: 'I shall bless your bread.'

In conclusion, it appears that the rendering of the statement of Exod. 3.14a is due to understanding the verb forms of the source text as expressing a general present and the effect of the sentence construction as a matter of emphasis but also to the necessity to render the etymological wordplay of the source text in 3.14-15 in an intelligible way and to make the statement a good preparation for the surrogate name *Kyrios*.

The question remains, however, in what sense exactly the translator and his first readers understood the divine statement as he reformulated it. In all probability this is connected with his view of God, and the question can therefore be answered only by investigating the traces he left of his theological views within the whole translation of Exodus.

3. *On the Theological Background of Certain Translation Changes*

In the past, a single translation change was often considered enough to detect the theological view of the translator. The supposed metaphysical meaning of *ho ōn* in Exod. 3.14a is, in fact, the example par excellence of such a point of view! Instead, however, one should first see whether a translation change has to do with the particularities of the target language and the difficulties in rendering a certain text in that language.[100] Only after that can we consider the question whether the change has a ideological or theological motivation.

99. Wevers describes the removal of inconsistencies as an important tendency of translation changes in LXX Exodus. See 'Translation and Canonicity', pp. 298-99. Cf. Staffan Olofsson, 'The Septuagint and Jewish Interpretive Tradition' (orig. 1996), in Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis: Collected Essays on the Septuagint Version* (ConBOT, 57; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 86-104, esp. 95: he describes more generally harmonization as an 'exegetical technique' common to Hebrew manuscripts, the Septuagint, the Targums, and the Samaritan Pentateuch.

100. To mention a few factors. For a more complete survey and discussion of the different aspects, see Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, esp. secs. 1.2-4 of the 'Introduction', pp. 14-27.

In line with this point of view, the peculiarity of the rendering *ho ōn* in Exod. 3.14a was explained from the translation context in the previous section. Nevertheless, such an interpretation does not completely exclude the idea that a philosophical or theological motivation was also involved.[101] In the case of Exod. 3.14, this is quite possible since the rendering is rather free. However, because linguistic factors apparently play an important role, it will be virtually impossible to determine such a motivation.[102] Given this situation, we might be inclined to give up this search. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we have to abandon all efforts to retrieve the original sense of the translated text. With regard to a crucial 'theological' statement such as that of Exod. 3.14a, we may suppose that the translation change does not contradict translation changes made elsewhere on the basis of a theological point of view. We can even go one step further and ask ourselves whether these other changes throw light on the question how the translator understood the statement as it now stands.

Translation changes are relevant to us only if the same translator was involved as the one of Exod. 3.14. This may at least partially be doubted for the tabernacle account of Exodus 25-40. The text about the actual building of the tabernacle shows significant deviations from the Masoretic text (chs. 35-40), whereas the text about the planning of this building (chs. 25-31) follows the Hebrew rather closely. This situation is explained in different ways.[103] Pending this discussion it will not be wise to build much on these chapters.

The present section will systematically investigate translation changes elsewhere in Exodus as far as they may indicate a theological tendency. Because of its extent, this investigation provides a rather comprehensive study of the theology of the translator of Exodus.[104]

101. Cf. Emanuel Tov, 'Theologically Motivated Exegesis Embedded in the Septuagint', in D.M. Goldenberg (ed.), *Translation of Scripture* (JQRSup; cong.; Philadelphia: Annenberg Research Institute, 1990), pp. 215-33 (abbreviated and slightly adapted in Tov, *The Greek and the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* [VTSup, 72; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999], pp. 257-69). In translations Tov wishes to distinguish 'linguistic exegesis' sharply from 'theological exegesis'.

102. In this respect my view has undergone a shift in relation to what has been expressed in the *NTT* article (see n. 6 above).

103. Chs. 25-31 as a later addition to the Hebrew text of Exodus (which has been subsequently translated in Greek in a faithful way): Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, 'L'importance de la Septante et du "Monacensis" de la Vetus Latina pour l'exégèse du livre de l'Exode (chap. 35-40)', in M. Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction—Reception—Interpretation* (BETL, 126; cong.; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), pp. 399-428; chs. 35-40 as translated by another, second translator: Martha Lynn Wade, *Consistency of Translation Techniques in the Tabernacle Accounts of Exodus in the Old Greek* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), passim.

104. However, it does not cover the whole matter, e.g., the cases where the translator softens a harsh description of God or underlines his involvement and initiative; see

a. *Isolated Translation Changes that Could Be Related to Exodus 3.14*
In this subsection translation changes are treated that are sometimes supposed to be linked more or less directly to Exod. 3.14.

Ho Ōn *as 'Eternal' Being.* First of all, the view will be discussed that *ho ōn* refers to the lasting, 'eternal' being of God.[105]

This view is supported by a similar interpretation of the divine statement in Palestinian Targums, in which the verb form of the relative clause is unfolded in two or three different tenses. For instance, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan renders the divine designation of Exod. 3.14b in two tenses: 'I [am] he who was and who [is] in the future (*'ŏtîd*) to be / who shall be.'[106] Moreover, in the same Targum a tripartite paraphrase of the divine statement is found at Deut. 32.39 in which the first relative clause consists of a participle: 'I [am] he who [is] being /is [*hwy*, *hāwe*] and who was and I [am] he who shall be.'[107]

This kind of interpretation of the Greek text of Exod. 3.14a can be based on the imperfective aspect that *ōn* has as a present participle and further on a contextual exegesis: v. 13 questions the relationship between God's revelation in ancestral time and his sending of Moses in the present time. Moreover, in v. 15 the name mentioned is explicitly qualified as 'forever'. The Greek translation reads: 'this is an everlasting / eternal name (*onoma aiōnion*) of mine and a memorial (*mnēmosynon*) to generations of generations (*geneōn geneais*).' Nevertheless, however appealing this contextual interpretation may be, it cannot determine the correctness of the view in question: we are not dealing with an original text but with a translation. Unfortunately, other translation changes hardly support this view. Only in Exod. 15.18 do we find

Wevers, 'Two Reflections', pp. 32 and 33-34, respectively. Neither does it deal with the translation of *tôrâ* by *nomos*; see Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, *La notion de* nomos *dans le Pentateuque grec* (AnBib, 52; orig. diss.; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973), pp. 102-15.

105. J. Freudenthal, 'Are There Traces of Greek Philosophy in the Septuagint?', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 2 (1890), pp. 205-22, esp. 220). In this context he refers to the connection with 'Palestinian exegesis' (i.e. that found in the Targum) by Z. Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1841), p. 179. Cf. Z. Frankel, *Ueber den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig: Barth, 1851), pp. 82-83 (there using a heavily philosophical wording: to the statement he attributes 'die Bedeutung des nothwendigen Seins und daher der Unendlichkeit [Ewigkeit] Gottes').

106. Cf. Chapter 2, n. 229; for the tri- or bipartite temporal formulas in the Targums, see also sec. 5 in this chapter (about Rev. 1.4 etc.).

107. In this connection see in particular Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (AnBib, 27; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), pp. 110-12 (McNamara supposes that Rev. 1.4, 8 is dependent on this Targum paraphrase).

a certain emphasis on God's continuity: 'Yhwh will reign for ever (*l^{e}'ōlām*) and always (*wā'ed*)' becomes '*Kyrios* [is] reigning ever (*ton aiōna*) and for ever (*epi aiōna*), and further (*eti*).' It should, however, be observed that the last word, *eti*, 'still / further', has probably been inspired by a similarity in sound with the Hebrew word *'ad* / *'ed*, 'continuation of time' (the phenomenon of 'homoeophony'). The lengthening of the sentence can therefore be explained by a double rendering of this Hebrew word.[108]

Ho Ōn *as Resumed in Exod. 6.3.* It is sometimes supposed that the *ōn* of Exod. 3.14 is resumed in 6.3.[109] According to the Hebrew text, Yhwh says there that he appeared to the ancestors as El Shadday (*'ēl šaddāy*). The Greek text reads here, however: *theos* ōn *autōn*, 'being god of them'. The occurrence of *ōn* is remarkable here, because in Genesis *El Shadday* is rendered only as 'your god' or 'my god'.[110] It is, however, rather improbable that *ōn* would be emphasized within the clause. The order of nominal predicate + *ōn* + adjunct seems to be usual (see, for the 'historical books', also Gen. 6.9; 3 Kgdms [1 Kgs] 12.24a; 2 Esd. 6.6).[111] From another point of view, it could be said that the 'hiatus' between the two signifying elements caused by the insertion of the verb serves to make each of these elements more prominent.[112] No less significant is that the phrase as a whole is reminiscent of the divine part of the covenantal formula (which sounds like 'You shall be my people and I shall be your god').[113] It stresses therefore the

108. The phrase may also suggest that '*aiōn* by itself is of limited scope' (note that its original meaning is 'lifetime'). Quoted from Heleen M. Keizer, *Life Time Entirety: A Study of AIŌN in Greek Literature and Philosophy, the Septuagint and Philo* (diss.; University of Amsterdam, 1999), p. 165 (there primarily in connection with Mic. 4.5).

109. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 73; Martin Rösel, 'Theo-logie der griechischen Bibel: Zur Wiedergabe der Gottesaussagen im LXX-Pentateuch', *VT* 48 (1998), pp. 49-62, esp. 56.

110. Gen. 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; 43.14; 48.3 (all with *theos* + genitive pronoun); 49.25 (+ possessive pronoun). The usual explanation of this rendering is that *šdy* was derived from the relative pronoun *š^{e}* and Aramaic *dî*, 'of me'. In this sense Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, p. 14.

111. Word order in Koine Greek is in general a rather delicate subject. For some introductory remarks see G. Horrocks, 'Syntax: From Classical Greek to the Koine', in A.-F. Christidis (ed.), *A History of Ancient Greek: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 618-31, esp. 621-23. In subordinate and participial clauses the word order is even less clear than in main clauses. Cf. also Exod. 29.46 (in a LXX plus) with an infinitive but further the same elements as in 6.3: *theos einai autōn*.

112. Cf. Luise Lindhamer, *Zur Wortstellung im Griechischen: Eine Untersuchung über die Spaltung syntaktisch eng zusammengehöriger Glieder durch das Verbum* (diss.; Borna/Leipzig: Noske, 1908), pp. 71-72.

113. Cf. (LXX) Gen. 17.7, 8; Exod. 6.7; 29.45, 46; also there *theos* is always without article. In the Hebrew Bible the divine part of the formula is initially found separately

covenantal character of this god, as suits this context very well (see vv. 4-5, 7a, 8a; in 7a with the full covenantal formula).

The Impact of the Change of Exod. 2.25. Sometimes a philosophical sense is attributed to the translation change in the last clause of Exod. 2.25, the final one of the prologue to the narrative of Moses' call. In the Masoretic text we read: 'God knew.' The Greek rendering *egnōsthē autois* can be interpreted in two ways: 'he [God] became known to them [the Israelites]' or 'he made himself known to them.' The latter interpretation is preferable because the clause follows just after the active clause 'God looked upon (*epeiden*) the Children of Israel.' In any case, from the Masoretic consonantal text the Greek translation is not self-evident.[114] On its basis the translation 'knew' would be expected rather than 'made himself known' (the *waw* is apparently read only once: *wyd'*, not with a *mater lectionis waw*: *wywd'*). The Hebrew text argues even more for the translation 'God' and not for 'to them' (the *mater lectionis yod* is found in another position: it is *'lhym* and not *'lyhm*). On the other hand, the text present to the translator was not completely comparable in clarity to the Masoretic consonant text as printed today: the *mater lectionis waw* may have been absent; the *yod,* the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, not so recognizable. Nevertheless, it remains natural to read the last clause of 2.25 in line with the preceding ones (with 'God heard . . . , God remembered . . . , God saw . . .'; cf. 3.7) and therefore to read it parallel with them as 'God knew.'

It is often supposed that the Hebrew text caused some trouble to the translator because an indication of an object of knowing is missing.[115] However, in many similar cases he chose a far less drastic solution, such as rendering it without any object, as in the source text (16.22; 19.25; 22.9/10), translating it by a participial construction (17.12; 24.6, 7) or adding a pronominal object (2.3; 16.15; 18.21). A translation of the Hebrew text of 2.25 in the way last mentioned can base its case on a syntactical rule of Biblical Hebrew, one that is generally ignored in its exegesis, unfortunately.[116] This

(see Gen. 17.7, 8). When it connects the last occurrence of the divine designation El Shadday in the Pentateuch with the divine part of the formula, Exod. 6.3 LXX is in line with this feature.

114. Contra Werner H. Schmidt, *Exodus,* I (BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), pp. 77, 79: he reads the Greek translation into the Hebrew text ('Gott tat sich kund').

115. Schmidt, *Exodus*, p. 79; Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 24.

116. Besides Schmidt, *Exodus*, p. 79, see also, e.g., Richard Nelson Boyce, *The Cry to God in the Old Testament* (SBLDiss, 103; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 68: he supposes that the absence of an object points forward to v. 7—where the verb 'know' has an object ('their plight').

is the rule of grammatical ellipsis: in a sequence of two verbs with the same object, the designation of the object may be omitted with the second verb.[117] In all probability, the reason for the translation change should therefore not be sought in the absence of an overt object.

The reason for the translation change is sometimes sought in the intention of preserving the idea of divine omniscience,[118] something that would be an indication of a more philosophical conception of God. However, as such, it would be an isolated phenomenon in Exodus. It is more probable that the translation change serves only to smooth away the abrupt transition from 2.25 to 3.1 in the Hebrew text, since the translator tends to avoid uneasy transitions, even one that concerns only a difference in person of the verb form (see sec. 2b, last part). The interpretation of the last clause of 2.25 as given by the translation has probably been promoted by the use of the recognition formula in relation to Israel in Exodus 6 and later: 'you will know that I am Yhwh-*Kyrios* (your god)' (6.7; 10.2; 16.12). This formula has also influenced the translation elsewhere (see sec. 3d).

Against the background of these considerations, the conclusion must be that the translation change of 2.25 does not provide evidence for a philosophical interpretation of *ho ōn* in Exod. 3.14.

b. *The Issues of Anthropomorphism and Seeing God*

In the present and next subsections, patterns of translation changes are investigated that indicate a theological tendency. First of all, the supposed tendency of avoiding anthropomorphic language for God, a classic theme in Septuagint studies, will be dealt with. Such anti-anthropomorphism is clearly articulated in the works of Philo, who strongly emphasizes that 'God is not *like* a human being' (after Num. 23.19 LXX) and sees anthropomorphic language in Scripture only as an adaptation to human weaknesses.[119] For a long time this tendency has been regarded as already present in the translation of the Septuagint and also there a sign of a more

117. See Carl Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1956), sec. 137; J.P. Lettinga and T. Muraoka, *Grammatica van het Bijbels Hebreeuws* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 11th edn, 2000), sec. 81d.

118. Jan Joosten, 'Une théologie de la Septante? Réflexions méthodologiques sur l'interprétation de la version grecque', *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 132 (2000), pp. 31-46, esp. 39 (he refers to Deut. 32.20; Hos. 8.4, but notes at the same time that such a cumulative argument is not decisive, among other things because the examples are found in different units of translation).

119. See, e.g., *Deus* 53-54, 63-68, *Somn* 1.237; *QG* 2.54. See further David Winston, 'Philo's Conception of the Divine Nature', in L.E. Goodman (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 21-42, esp. 23-24.

abstract, transcendent conception of God.[120] This issue cannot be investigated in its entirety here, but only one question viewed as related to it will be studied, namely, translation changes in the Exodus texts about seeing God.[121]

At the end of the burning bush scene we read in the Hebrew text (3.6): 'Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.' This becomes in the Septuagint: 'Moses turned off his face for he was anxious to look down before (*enōpion*) God.' At 24.10 the Hebrew text says: 'And they [Moses and the Elders of Israel] saw the God of Israel', whereas in Greek it reads: 'And they saw the place, there where the God of Israel stood.' Therefore, according to the Septuagint version, they saw only what was below God. In the next verse (24.11), the idea of seeing something is completely avoided by changing the verb into a passive: 'And they beheld God' is turned into 'And they appeared in the place of God.' The designation of God as 'the being' in Exod. 3.14 is sometimes seen as the other side of avoiding speaking about seeing God, while both would be adaptations to Greek philosophy.[122] In line with this, it is worth mentioning that Plato connected the world of Ideas with invisibility; later God was seen by followers of Plato as invisible, for instance, as Philo illustrates.[123]

However, other explanations of the reserve in relation to seeing are also possible. We find a similar tendency in renderings of the Palestinian Targums: 'he was afraid to look on the glory of the Shekhinah [the Presence] of the Lord' (3.6); and 'they saw the glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord'

120. See Fritsch, *Anti-Anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch*, passim. This view is already found in Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, pp. 174-78 (but related by him to a Palestinian influence).

121. Charles T. Fritsch, 'A Study of the Greek Translation of the Hebrew Verbs "to See", with Deity as Subject or Object', in B.A. Levine and A. Malamat (eds.), *Harry M. Orlinsky Volume* (Eretz-Israel, 16; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982), pp. 51*-56*; Anthony Hanson, 'The Treatment in the LXX of the Theme of Seeing God', in G.J. Brooke and B. Lindars (eds.), *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings* (SBLSCS, 33; cong.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 557-68.

122. In fact, the author concerned, Graham I. Davies, expresses himself much more vaguely. See Davies, 'The Exegesis of the Divine Name in Exodus', in R.P. Gordon, *The God of Israel* (UCOP, 64; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 139-56, esp. 154: the changes intend 'to give the God of the Jews the status that would match the claims that the philosophers made for the fundamental reality of the universe'. He does not explain this view further.

123. See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, I (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968 [orig. 1947]), pp. 201-202. About visible and invisible more or less like Plato see *Her* 75, 280; *Spec* 1.302; in connection with God *Conf* 138, 172 (powers); *Mut* 7-9 (referring to Exod. 33.13, 23); *Abr* 75-76; *Spec* 1.20, 279, 302; 4.192.

(24.10).[124] The circumlocutory way of speaking about what is seen in relation to God seems to emphasize his exaltedness above ordinary things. The change of the text of 3.6 in the Septuagint is clearly in agreement with this idea: in fact, Moses is depicted there as bowing towards the ground out of reverence, as was appropriate in the presence of royalty.[125] The tendency is also nurtured by the caution the Hebrew Bible itself exercises in speaking about seeing God (e.g. in Exodus 3 his manifestation is called an angel; in ch. 24 only a few prominent persons see him, not to speak about what ch. 33 says).[126]

Nevertheless, the first parts of the Septuagint translation of Exodus (up to and including ch. 24) go much further and avoid any reference to a vision of God. In this respect the translation of this book is even unique in comparison with the translation of the other books of the Pentateuch.[127] This peculiarity can, however, be explained simply by the need to avoid a contradiction with the divine statement found in Exod. 33.20a: 'for a human will not see my face [MT: me] and live.'[128] This statement expresses a profound conviction in Israelite religion, as shown by several biblical passages expressing the same idea.[129] At the same time the translation of Exodus avoids another

124. See the translation of Targum Neofiti 1 in Martin McNamara, Robert Hayward and Michael Maher, *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus—Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus* (The Aramaic Bible, 2; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), pp. 18 and 104; cf. 168 and 231-32 for Pseudo-Jonathan (strikingly, the looking at the divine glory is connected there only with Nadab and Abihu, the persons punished later for their wrongdoings [Num. 26.60-61], which suggests that here too their deed is seen as a transgression).

125. Wevers, 'Two Reflections', pp. 36-37. Jan Joosten points out the relationship of the expression 'looking before God' with other similar expressions, especially 'sinning before God' (e.g. Exod. 10.16; 32.33). The intention will be an avoidance of the suggestion that God is directly concerned. Because this reflects the style once used at Persian court, it is a witness to the Aramaic background of the Septuagint translators. See Joosten, 'L'agir humain *devant* Dieu. Remarques sur une tournure remarquable de la Septante', *RB* 113 (2006), pp. 5-17 (for Exod. 3.6 see p. 9).

126. See now also Jan Joosten, 'To See God: Conflicting Exegetical Tendencies in the Septuagint', in M. Karrer and W. Kraus (eds.), *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (WUNT, 219; cong.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 287-99, esp. 288-89.

127. See Innocent Himbaza, 'Voir Dieu. LXX d'Exode contre TM et LXX du Pentateuque', in D. Böhler, I. Himbaza and P. Hugo (eds.), *L'Ecrit et l'Esprit: Études d'histoire du texte et de théologie biblique* (Festschrift A. Schenker; OBO, 214; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), pp. 100-111, esp. 107-109. Cf., however, n. 124 above (about Targum Pseudo-Jonathan).

128. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, pp. 28, 384; also Wevers, 'Two Reflections', pp. 36-37.

129. See also Gen. 32.31; Exod. 19.21; 24.11; Judg. 6.22-23; 13.22; 1 Sam. 6.19; Isa. 6.5.

inconsistency: the paradox that Moses would ask the (exceptional) favour of seeing God (33.13, 18), whereas, according to the narration of Exodus in Hebrew, he has already seen him (in ch. 24).[130] The avoidance of discrepancies and contradictions is not only attested in these cases, but, as is evident from other examples, it constitutes a general feature of the translation of Exodus.[131]

It appears therefore that the concept of anti-anthropomorphism, therefore, more or less philosophically informed, does not give an adequate explanation of the restraint on speaking about seeing God in Exodus. As a consequence, we cannot base a philosophical explanation of Exod. 3.14a merely on this translation peculiarity. Also, other supposed cases do not really argue for an anti-anthropomorphic tendency in Exodus. A number of them can be better understood as avoiding similarity with other gods. This can explain the rendering of God's qualification as 'a man of war' by '[he is] shattering wars' (15.3, he is not a war god); 'you blew with your wind' by 'you sent your wind' (15.10, he is not a storm god),[132] or 'the glory of God dwelt on Mount Sinai' by that it 'descended' there (24.16, he is not a mountain god). What seems to worry the translator in these cases is therefore not a resemblance to human beings but to other gods. A similar concern is manifest in the tabernacle story, for instance, in the translation of 'I shall dwell (*škn*) among them' by 'I shall be seen by you / shall show myself (*ophthēsomai*) to you' (25.8/7) or 'I shall be invoked (*epiklēthēsomai*) by [them]' (29.45; similarly v. 46). Readers could easily associate speaking of God's dwelling among them with such Gentile customs as carrying gods around in the city.[133] Such examples are manifestations of a concern for distinguishing Israelite religion from other religions, a preoccupation also touched on in the next subsection.

130. Himbaza, 'Voir Dieu', p. 106; he also shows that the formulations of Moses' questions in vv. 13 and 18 in the LXX (e.g. 'Show me yourself' in v. 13) are more or less adapted to God's strict interpretation in v. 20a of Moses' wish (pp. 103-104).

131. See the literature concerning Exodus in n. 94 above, esp. Wevers, 'Translation and Canonicity', pp. 299-301 (removal of apparent discrepancies and self-contradictions); and further Benjamin D. Sommer, 'Translation as Commentary: The Case of the Septuagint to Exodus 32-33', *Textus* 20 (2000), pp. 43-60, esp. 59 ('The goal of this translation *cum* commentary is to make the text clearer and easier to read specifically at those places that are most baffling to a reader who presumes the text's unity and coherence').

132. Cf. the wind as issuing from the nostrils of Seth in Egyptian religion. See R.O. Faulkner, *Ancient Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 311 (§ 2244).

133. The amazing introduction by the LXX of God's being *seen* in 25.8 (instead of speaking of God's dwelling) and other places of the Pentateuch may reflect an Egyptian religious context; see Jan Joosten, 'To See God', pp. 295-96 (292).

c. *The Contrast between Kyrios and the Other Gods*

It is often supposed that *ho ōn* is a qualification of God that is meant to provide a contrast with other gods. In particular his existence would be strongly affirmed, and that of the other gods implicitly denied.[134] Let us, therefore, investigate how God and the other gods are characterized in the Septuagint translation of Exodus and what this implies for the understanding of Exod. 3.14 in this translation.

Monotheistic Tendencies? In the prohibition of 20.23 against making gods of gold or silver for oneself, the qualification of the gods as '[to be] with me (*'ittî*)' (= Yhwh) is omitted. The change of the commandment in 20.3 from '[There] will be to you no other gods before my face (*'al-pānāy*)' into '[There] will be to you no other gods beyond me (*plēn emou*)' should be evaluated in this context.[135] In these cases the other gods have become more the affair of people.

In 8.6/10 the recognition of incomparability 'there is nobody like Yhwh, our god' becomes a matter of exclusivity: 'there is nobody besides *Kyrios*.' Since the apposition 'our god' has been omitted, the statement has received a more absolute character in the translation. Is the existence of other gods therefore denied?[136] This should not be taken for granted. Such phrases are also found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, in particular in Deutero-Isaiah (their Greek renderings are not relevant in this connection because in all probability these did not exist at the time of the translation of Exodus). The most similar ones are the following: 'there is nobody except you (*biltekā*)' (1 Sam. 2.2);[137] 'there is nobody beyond me (*zûlātî*)' (Isa. 45.21); or '[there is] nothing / nobody (*'epes*) apart from me (*bil'ādāy*)' (Isa. 45.6). It is noteworthy that these statements are parallel with 'there is no rock like our god' (1 Sam. 2.2) and 'there is not another god apart from me, a just and saving god' (Isa. 45.21). This suggests that these statements do not deny the exist-

134. See Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin, *Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte*, III. *Der Gottesname Kyrios der Septuaginta und die Entwicklung des Gottesbegriffs in den Religionen der semitischen Völker* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1929), p. 699 ('"der wahrhaft seiende", der "wahre Gott"', meanings which Bauddissin distinguishes from the one often attributed to it of the absolute being or eternal being: '"der unbedingt, der für immer Seiende"'); Bernhardt, *hyh*, p. 380 (see n. 5 above).

135. Differently, Schreiner, 'Thora in griechischem Gewand', p. 52: it concerns 'eine Deutung im Sinne des Monotheismus'.

136. Cf. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 110: 'Exod[us LXX] has a monotheistic statement.'

137. Cf. C.L. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (orig. diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), pp. 115-16.

ence of other spiritual powers,[138] but that they only affirm their inferiority. In need you cannot count on them; in decisive moments they are not able to suit the action to the word.[139] We are not allowed to go beyond such a conclusion only on the basis of the rendering of Exod. 8.6/10.[140] In this context, it is not unimportant that the statement is connected with the announcement of the termination of a plague.

Possible Negative Qualifications in Relation to the Gods. The word *'bd*, 'serve', is generally translated by *latreuein* in Exodus. That is true not only in relation to Israel's god but also with other gods. In the latter case, it always concerns a prohibition (20.5; 23.24). However, in 23.33, in connection with the making of a covenant with other gods, the verb *douleuein* is used. Elsewhere in the Septuagint text of Exodus (14.5, 12; 21.2, 6), this verb describes relationships of slavery between people. Presumably, the translation with this word in 23.33 indicates therefore that the making of a covenant with other gods leads to a situation of slavery (cf. Deut. 28.64).[141] A similar tendency to demarcate Israelite worship from pagan cult is later found in the use of different words for the translation of altar (*mizbēaḥ*): *bōmos* is used in connection with Gentile gods (in Exodus only in 34.13); whereas *thysiastērion* is employed in relation to *Kyrios*.[142]

138. Thus Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, 'Gibt es Götter bei Deuterojesaja?', in A. Graupner, H. Delkurt and A.B. Ernst (eds.), *Verbindungslinien* (Festschrift W.H. Schmidt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), pp. 109-23.

139. For a more comprehensive discussion of the incomparability and exclusivity phrases, see H. Ringgren, s.v. *ʾelōhîm*, *TDOT,* I, pp. 282-84; Meindert Dijkstra, *Gods voorstelling: Predikatieve expressie van zelfopenbaring in oud-oosterse teksten en Deutero-Jesaja* (diss.; Kampen: Kok, 1980), pp. 281-91 (English summary at pp. 432-33). Among other things, the latter author analyzes *(wᵉ) ēyn 'ôd*: this phrase denies the *further* presence or availability of something or somebody (see 2 Kgs 4.6; 1 Kgs 22.7). This phrase in Deutero-Isaiah will mean the denial that the other gods are still really *actively present* and (by implication) the denial that they should be supported as such.

140. Cf. Labuschagne, *Incomparability of Yahweh*, 146 note: 'If it is indeed a free translation of our Hebrew text, it proves that the Septuagint translators [*sic*] understood incomparability in the sense of uniqueness.' Cf. two conclusions of Eberhard Bons in relation to the Psalms: 'Keine der zitierten Passagen formuliert ein eindeutiges monotheistischen Bekenntnis. Der Gott Israels wird folglich nicht als der einzige Gott verstanden, sondern als einzigartig und unvergleichlich'; and 'Die Rede von Göttern bereitet keine Schwierigkeiten, solange die herausgehobene Stellung und Andersartigkeit des Gottes Israels nicht in Frage gestellt wird.' See Bons, 'Die Rede von Gott in den Psalmen^{LXX}', in H.-J. Fabry and D. Böhler (eds.), *Im Brennpunkt: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der griechischen Bibel*, III (BWANT, 174/9, 14; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), pp. 182-202, esp. 189.

141. Suzanne Daniel, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire du culte dans la Septante* (diss.; Paris: Klincksieck, 1966), pp. 66-67 (and 68); cf. 56, 57.

142. Daniel, V*ocabulaire du culte*, pp. 16-17. She refers to a similar tendency in the Targums. For the not so self-evident use of *thysiastērion* in Exod. 32.5, see p. 17.

It is sometimes supposed that in the prohibition of Exodus 20.4 the word *eidōlon* is used for rendering *pesel* (literally, something 'cut', a 'carved image') because of the negative connotation that there is no reality behind the image of the other gods.[143] It would then be the direct counterpart of *ho ōn* in the sense of existence! However, this point of view is not so self-evident. It should first of all be noted that the literal rendering of *pesel* by *glypton*, 'carved image', in Exod. 20.4 was initially not self-evident. This word was only rarely employed for images of gods by non-Jewish people;[144] as a literal rendering of *pesel* it seems to have been discovered only later in the Pentateuch by the Septuagint translators (Exod. 34.13; Lev. 26.1; about eight times in Deuteronomy, e.g., 5.8).[145] What matters even more is that the use of the word *eidōlon* is not so univocal. It is also employed in a neutral sense in non-Jewish Greek for images of gods.[146] It basically means a copy of an appearance, as perceived by the senses; as such it may get in certain contexts the negative sense of a mere appearance, one without any substance.[147] As for the Pentateuch, it is used to render a variety of words for images of gods. The exact meaning of the majority of these words is unclear up to the present day, and it seems that the sense of image of gods has apparently only been inferred by the translators. This applies to *t^{e}rāpîm* (Gen. 31.19, 34, 35; cf. 1 Kgdms / 1 Sam. 19.13, 16); *^{e}lîlîm* ('nothingnesses'?, Lev. 19.4; rendered by *cheiropoiēmata*, 'handmade things', in Lev. 26.1); *gîllûlîm* (Lev. 26.30; Deut. 29.16/17).[148] In a few cases in Numbers, it specifies the word used

143. Thus W. Barnes Tatum, 'The LXX Version of the Second Commandment (Ex. 20,3-6 = Deut. 5,7-10): A Polemic against Idols, Not Images', *JSJ* 17 (1986), pp. 177-95, esp. 185-86. Among other things, he notes: 'with the adoption of one central term in the LXX, this polemic against other gods becomes more focused. . . . They are "idols"—the "unreal"'; in fact, he confuses the translation changes with their *Wirkungsgeschichte*). Similarly Le Boulluec and Sandevoir, *L'Exode*, p. 205; Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 308.

144. See Francisco R. Adrados (ed.), *Diccionario Griego-Español*, IV (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1994), s.v., p. 822: this dictionary mentions only one case. The reference is to Bruno Helly, 'A Larisa: Bouleversements et remise en ordre de sanctuaires', *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970), pp. 250-96, esp. 259 (note).

145. In Exod. 34.13 'you shall burn *glypta* with fire' forms a plus in comparison to the Masoretic text. This clause is also found in Deut. 7.5, where *glypta* renders *p^{e}sîlîm*.

146. See Terry Griffith, '*Eidōlon* as "Idol" in non-Jewish and non-Christian Greek', *JTS* 53 (2002), pp. 95-101.

147. See Suzanne Saïd, 'Deux noms de l'image en grec ancient: Idole et icône', in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1987* (Paris: l'Académie des Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres/Boccard, 1987), pp. 309-30. Cf. Friedrich Büchsel, s.v. *eidōlon* (orig. 1935), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* II (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), esp. pp. 375-78.

148. Cf. Charles A. Kennedy, 'The Semantic Field of the Term "Idolatry"', in L.M. Hopfe (ed.), *Uncovering Ancient Stones* (Festschrift H.N. Richardson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), pp. 193-204, esp. 200-204: the suggested incomprehension of these Hebrew words does not prevent him from attributing to them a positive or negative

(*ʾelōhîm*, 'gods', in 25.2 [2x]; *ṣelem*, 'image', in 33.52). Only in Deut. 32.21 the negative connotations seem to be exploited. There it translates *hebel*, 'vanity', and forms a parallel to 'no-god'.[149] On the basis of this survey, we may suppose that in Genesis, Exodus (20.4) and Leviticus the term *eidōlon* was chosen only because of its functional content. This word was presumably preferred to other more usual words for images of gods such as *agalma*, 'showpiece' (only used in Isa. 19.3; 21.9), because of their positive associations.

What is more telling is the translation of 8.22/26, according to which the Israelites wish to sacrifice the 'abomination*s* (plural; Greek: *bdelygmata*) of the Egyptians'. The singular 'abomination' (*tôʿēbâ*) of the Hebrew source text refers in all probability to a taboo for the Egyptians (cf. v. 22b, 'they will stone us'), but the plural of the translation seems to suggest a negative characterization of the Egyptian gods, which were represented in animal form.[150]

A Positive Attitude toward the Gods? There are, however, also translation changes that, at first sight, seem to show a more positive attitude towards the other gods. In Exod. 15.11, 'who [is] like you among the gods, [O] Yhwh, who [is] like you, majestic in holiness? (*bā-qōdeš*)' the last part becomes 'who is like you, glorified among holy ones (*en hagiois*)?' The translator has interpreted 'holiness' metonymically as 'holy ones' (as an *abstractum pro concreto*), although the structure of the following phrases argues against it (it forms a sequence with 'awesome in praises, worker of wonders').[151] Does the term 'holy ones' here refer to (a) heavenly beings or to (b) select people?[152] The parallelism with 'gods' favours the first option.

sense, thus apparently confusing the level of source and that of translation. His overall conclusion is that *eidōlon* got only a negative sense with Tertullian's rendering in Latin by *idolum*.

149. Similarly the translations of Jer. 14.22 and 16.19. Outside the Pentateuch, there are even clearer indications for the presence of such negative connotations; see esp. 2 Chron. 11.15 (// *mataioi*, 'futilities'). Cf. Robert Hayward, 'Observations on Idols in Septuagint Pentateuch', in S.C. Barton (ed.), *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), pp. 40-57: he depicts a speculative history departing from Deut. 32.21 LXX.

150. Rösel, 'Theo-logie der griechischen Bibel', p. 60.

151. 'Holy ones' is sometimes even read back into the Hebrew text: see Patrick D. Miller, 'Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33', *HTR* 57 (1964), pp. 240-43, esp. 241 note.

152. Cf. (a) Tob. 8.15; also Deut. 33.3 (LXX, v. 2: 'angels' instead of 'holy ones'!); Amos 4.2 LXX; and (b) Ps. 82.4 LXX; Dan. 7.8 LXX; Tob. 12.15; 1 Macc. 1.46, respectively. See further Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (TSAJ, 34; orig. diss.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), pp. 73-95.

It should also be noted, however, that this parallelism also reduces the gods to the entourage of *Kyrios*.

At 22.27/28 we read in Hebrew: '[As for] God (*'elōhîm*), you shall not revile (*qll*) [him].'[153] This becomes in the Greek translation: 'Of gods (*theous*, without article), you shall not speak badly (*ou kakologēseis*).' The noun *'elōhîm* is apparently understood as a plural.[154] The formulation should, however, not be misunderstood: it does not encourage paying respect to the gods.[155,156] It only prohibits despising them, something that would apparently be quite natural for Israelites to do. This inclination should not astonish us in the context of the translations of 8.6/10 and 8.22/26. In all probability, the aim of the prohibition is that Jewish people should not unnecessarily express themselves blasphemously in public, in contact with people of other religions (think of the metropolis Alexandria!), if only with a view to self-preservation.[157]

It may be added that the translation change just mentioned is accompanied by another, more subtle and usually unnoticed but in principle no less important, change: 'nor shall you damn a chief *among your* people

153. Note that in the Hebrew text *'elōhîm* is used without article and without object marker but occurs in front position (therefore functioning as topic, as a sort of 'psychological subject'). From the parallel singular of *naśî'*, 'chief', in the next half verse, it may be concluded that in all probability *'elōhîm* should also be understood in the singular. For this conclusion, see Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 355.

154. According to Wevers, to the translator '"reviling God" is an unthinkable crime', and he interpreted the text therefore in another sense. See Wevers, 'Two Reflections', p. 35.

155. The text is interpreted more or less positively by Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (trans. S. Applebaum; New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 352 (expression of non-aggressive attitude); Roger Le Déaut, 'La Septante, un Targum?', in R. Kuntzmann and J. Schlosser (eds.), *Études sur le judaïsme hellénistique* (LD, 119; Paris: Cerf, 1984), pp. 147-95, esp. 181 (tolerance manifesting universalism); Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* (AGAJU, 30; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 491 (liberal attitude, be it because of political necessity).

156. On the basis of passages in the Targums, Peshitta and Mekhilta, Dirk L. Büchner suggests that the word *theoi* of the LXX does not relate to gods but to 'judges'. See Büchner, 'Exegetical Variants in the LXX of Exodus. An Evaluation', *JNSL* 22 (1996), pp. 35-58, esp. 51-52. However, this would be something exceptional within the context of the Greek translation of Exodus.

157. This corresponds to the second of the three reasons given by Philo for the prohibition in *QE* 2.5: criticism of religious opinions is 'the cause and the beginning of wars', whereas the Law of Moses is a source of peace. On Exod. 22.27/28 also in connection with Philo, see further Pieter W. van der Horst, '"Thou Shalt Not Revile the Gods": The LXX-translation of Ex. 22:28(27), its Background and Influence', in van der Horst, *Hellenism-Judaism-Christianity: Essays on their Interaction* (CBET, 8; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994), pp. 112-21; Robert Goldenberg, 'The Septuagint Ban on Cursing the Gods', *JSJ* 28 (1997), pp. 381-89.

(*naśî' b^{e}-'am-kā*)' is rendered by 'and you shall not talk badly of the rulers (*archontes*) *of the* people (*tou laou*).'[158] The object designation includes in principle also the 'high officials' of the administration in a foreign country. Without doubt, these changes have the same preventive aims as those in the first half-verse.

In conclusion, the contrast between *Kyrios* and the other gods does not play a major role in the translation changes in Exodus. This has certainly to do with the fact that, in agreement with the source text, the main opposition in the translation is the one between Yhwh-*Kyrios* and Pharaoh. Inasmuch as the translation changes are related to God and the other gods, they emphasize the exclusivity of God on the one hand, and presuppose or imply the degrading and discrediting of the other gods on the other. In none of these texts do the other gods play an active part, but they are depicted as the entourage of God or as only the affair of their worshippers. Nowhere is their existence denied outright, and therefore the peculiar translation of Exod. 3.14 does not have a close connection with these changes.

d. *The Rendering of the Divine Names*

The question, then, is whether other translation changes can throw light on the rendering of Exod. 3.14. The divine statement in this verse is closely connected with the proclamation of the divine name in Exod. 3.15. It is noteworthy that many translation changes in Exodus are found related to the divine names. Let us therefore look at them more closely.

As in other books of the Hebrew Bible, Yhwh is usually rendered in Exodus by *Kyrios* (mostly without article; '[the] Lord'), and *(ha-)'^{e}lōhîm* by *ho theos* (usually with article; '[the] God').[159] To explain the exceptions to this pattern, one might suppose that each of these designations called up certain associations and the translator adapted the use of the designations so that they would fit in their context. In agreement with old rabbinical traditions (but completely opposed to Philo's views!) and in particular with reference to Genesis, it has been suggested that *Kyrios* was linked to the favourable commitment of God with Israel and *ho theos* to his creative and judging powerful action.[160] Although this proposal is innovative, it is not so obvi-

158. About this word *archontes*, see also an article of my 'name sake', Cornelis *G.* den Hertog, 'Die griechische Übersetzung von Exodus 19:4 als Selbstzeugnis des frühhellinistischen Judentums', in R. Roukema (ed.), *The Interpretation of Exodus* (Festschrift C. Houtman; CBET, 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 181-91, esp. 186 (quoting R. Hanhart, 1988).

159. Cf. n. 95.

160. Martin Rösel, 'Die Übersetzung der Gottesnamen in der Genesis-Septuaginta', in Rösel, D.R. Daniels and U. Glessmer (eds.), *Ernten, was man sät* (Festschrift K.

ous in connection with Exodus.[161] There are, for instance, many passages in which *Kyrios* still renders Yhwh, but this rendering occurs in the distinct context of power and violence (see, e.g., 12.29; 14.25, there in favour of the Israelites; but for a different case see 19.25, in a LXX plus). Moreover, the point of departure of this proposal is that the translator liked to put order into the occurrences of the divine names. From a methodological point of view, it would be more sound to investigate first what problems the translator would have faced if he simply rendered the divine names, before proposing a solution.[162] Unfortunately, in the case of Exodus these problems are not obvious. We can only investigate the translation changes concerned by examining them in some sections and in some contexts and then ask ourselves what was their likely cause. This investigation will be carried out in the following part of this subsection.[163,164]

First attention will be paid to *the use of the divine name Kyrios by and in relation to Pharaoh.* Already at the beginning of their initial confrontation, Moses mentions the divine name in speaking to him of '*Kyrios*, the God of Israel' (5.1). However, Pharaoh himself says in the second part of his reply: 'I do not know *ton kyrion*' (5.2). What demands attention is the question why a definite article (*ton*) is used here.

Koch; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), pp. 357-77, esp. 365-77. E.J. Revell suggests as motive of the rabbinical distinction that the use of the title (*'ᵉlōhîm*, 'god') represents the official role, while the use of the name presents him as a person. See Revell, *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative* (CBET, 14; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), p. 206 note. For Philo in this context, see N.A. Dahl and Alan F. Segal, 'Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God', *JSJ* 9 (1978), pp. 1-28.

161. Contra Rösel, 'Theo-logie der griechischen Bibel', pp. 53-58, 60-61; and Rösel, 'Reading and Translation of the Divine Name', pp. 419-23 (both articles with references also to Exodus).

162. In this sense contra Rösel: Theo A.W. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies* (CBET, 47; diss.; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), p. 91. He also illustrates this principle for Genesis, see p. 91 (note).

163. The investigation will be based on the Masoretic Hebrew text according to K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (eds.), *Biblia hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969); and the Greek one according to John William Wevers (ed.), *Exodus* (Septuaginta, 2,1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991). Some occurrences of the divine names are disputable, but this does not change the overall picture. See also the survey of John William Wevers, *Text History of the Greek Exodus* (AAWG. PH 3.Ser., 192; MSU, 21; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), p. 240.

164. As will appear, this investigation has strongly profited from Wevers's findings in *Notes on Exodus*; in fact, it accentuates and systematizes them. For now, see esp. his general remarks at pp. 57 (at 4.30) and 100 (at 7.16).

To get a first impression of the issue involved some data are mentioned.[165] When functioning as an object accusative (without a preposition), *Kyrios* is employed with the article not only in 5.2 (verb: *oida,* 'know') but also in 9.30 and 14.31 (verb: *phobeomai*, 'fear'), however, without it in 17.2, 7 (verb: *peirazō*, 'test') and 33.7 (verb: *zēteō*, 'look for').[166] Note that the article is also used with the verb *oida* in 1 Kgdms (1 Sam.) 2.12; Job 36.12 and Isa. 4.13, always there too in relation to a negation (cf. with Joseph as object in Exod. 1.8; note, however, the use without the article in relation to *theos* in Gal. 4.8 and Tit. 1.16—in the last verse also without negation). How can such data be explained?

In my view there are several possibilities. (1) As in other cases, the article may be anaphoric and therefore refer back.[167] However, this explanation is not self-evident and should be distinguished from other possibilities. (2) Also the use of *Kyrios* as a proper name may play a part. In general without an article a name seems to be employed in a salient position; with an article in a non-salient one.[168] For instance, the name Moses is mostly used without an article: he is one of the central characters of the Exodus narrative. But in the case of 10.8 an article is employed: from the point of view of the servants of Pharaoh what counts is not Moses but Pharaoh (see also the use of the article in the genealogy in 6.14-27). The rules governing the use of the article with a name may explain its absence before *Kyrios* in 17.2, 7 and 33.7. (3) However, to explain the use of the article with *Kyrios* one should also take into account the use of the word as appellative (cf. the transition in 8.18/22, treated below). This may explain the use of the article with *phobeomai* in Exodus, something that is also usual in the other Septuagint books.

In connection with a person as object the verb *oida*, 'know', generally means 'be acquainted with' (1 Kgdms / 1 Sam. 2.12; Isa. 5.13; Job 18.21; 36.12), and this also seems more probable for Exod. 5.2.[169] In this context

165. Cf. Baudissin about this issue in a very long section in *Kyrios als Gottesname*, I. *Der Gebrauch des Gottesnamens Kyrios in der Septuaginta*' (also 1929; cf. n. 134 above), see esp. pp. 76-79. His conclusion in relation to the use of the article, also referring to dative cases, is: '(es handelt sich) darum, dass eine Betätigung von Menschen dem "Herrn" gegenüber ausgesagt wird' (p. 78).

166. Without article also in other cases, those of an *accusativus cum infinitivo*: 7.25; 16.8 (2x); and those after the use of the preposition *pros*, e.g., 4.10; 5.22.

167. See Larry Perkins, '*Kyrios:* Articulation and Non-Articulation in Greek Exodus', *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 41 (2008), pp. 17-33. Perkins tends to understand all articular occurrences of *Kyrios* as anaphoric, including Exod. 9.30; 14.31 (pp. 28-29).

168. In particular in New Testament studies the discourse features of the use of the article with proper names have been examined. See Jenny Heimerdinger and Stephen Levinsohn, 'The Use of the Definite Article before Names of People in the Greek Text of Acts with Particular Reference to Codex Bezae', *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 5 (1992), pp. 15-44; Kent Spielmann, 'Participant Reference and Definite Article in John', *JOTT* 7.1 (1995), pp. 45-85. Cf. also n. 70 above.

169. For these meanings of the verb, see T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), s.v., p. 487.

the function of the article of referring back seems to be relevant. In 5.2 Pharaoh would then quote Moses only in a stand-offish way (in this case *Kyrios* could be rendered as 'the Lord', thus in quotation marks, or even more explicitly as 'that Lord').[170] Other changes in ch. 5 support this interpretation. It is, for instance, noteworthy that the name Yhwh in the first part of Pharaoh's reply in 5.2 is not rendered in the translation. This is often interpreted as the result of a misreading of this name (as *hw'*, 'he').[171] In fact, this is only a makeshift solution (there are no other similar cases), while the explanation that the name has been suppressed is more likely because of its agreement with the general picture of the chapter. Yhwh is not rendered in the words of Moses to Pharaoh in 5.3 either; only the apposition 'our god' appears in the translation. In a request attributed very generally by Pharaoh to the Israelites (but in reality made by Moses, 5.17), Yhwh is even replaced by 'our god'. The non-use of *Kyrios* by Pharaoh seems therefore dictated by his non-recognition of the god of Israel.

The plagues narrative offers confirmation of this conclusion. The name *Kyrios* re-emerges only in the words that should be said to Pharaoh in 7.16, in the designation '*Kyrios*, the god of the Hebrews'. This is remarkable against the background of 3.18, where Yhwh is not rendered in this combination (nor is this done in connection with 'our god' in that verse). Subsequently, *Kyrios* is often used in speaking with Pharaoh, without any apposition or combined with 'our god'. What is even more significant is that Pharaoh himself sometimes speaks of *Kyrios*. He urges Moses to pray for the termination of a plague (8.4/8; 8.24/28—twice, with one plus in comparison with the MT; 9.28; 10.16, 17) and seems as such to recognize God; therefore the use of *Kyrios* is appropriate. More complicated is the use in 10.10b: 'Let it be so, *Kyrios* [without article; MT: Yhwh] with you! As I send you away, [would it] also [concern] your knapsack-belongings (*aposkeuē*)?[172] See that wickedness lies open in relation to you / is exposed from you!' After the announcement of a new plague (10.3-6) and after a discussion with his servants (10.7) Pharaoh seemed initially to give in to

170. Le Boulluec and Sandevoir, *L'Exode*, p. 107: 'Je connais pas "le Seigneur" et je ne renvoie pas Israël'; Perkins, '*Kyrios:* Articulation and Non-Articulation', p. 28: 'I do not know this Kyrios and this Israel I am not sending away.' (Note that, very rightly, Perkins also supposes a pejorative nuance for Israel in connection with the use of the article before it [this will in fact prepare the use of the word Hebrews in v. 3 in a suitable way].)

171. Le Boulluec and Sandevoir, *L'Exode*, p. 106; Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 59.

172. Interestingly, *aposkeuē* is one of the terms in the Septuagint the use of which has a military background: it means in general luggage but is used for family in military jargon. See Jan Joosten, 'Le milieu producteur du Pentateuque grec', *Revue des études juives* 165 (2006), pp. 349-61, esp. 358-60; M. O'Connor and John A.L. Lee, 'A Problem in Biblical Lexicography: The Case of Hebrew *ṭap* and Greek *aposkeuē*', *ZAW* 119 (2007), pp. 403-409, esp. 406-407. About the importance of this finding, see sec. 4, last part.

the request of Moses (10.8) and therefore to acknowledge God. However, the words quoted indicate that his permission for a leave is not complete. This becomes even more clear in his next words: 'Not so! But let the men leave, and you will serve *ho theos* [MT: Yhwh]! For this is what you yourselves request!' (10.11). The furious tone of this concession of Pharaoh is revealing; it makes the epithet *ho theos* sound stand-offish in his mouth. The article therefore probably refers back (meaning 'that god').

In comparison with the use of the name *Kyrios* by Pharaoh, its use by Israel is much less prominent. The reason is without doubt that the first part of Exodus relates the power struggle between *Kyrios*, with Moses as his representative, and Pharaoh. In this context the Israelites appear only marginally. Before ch. 15 there is only one utterance by them in which they use a divine designation. After Moses and Aaron have asked for a leave and Pharaoh has then worsened the labour conditions, 'the scribes of the Children of Israel' say to them: 'May God look upon you and judge!' (5.21). In this sentence, in which they obviously doubt the rightness of Moses' and Aaron's handling of their case, Yhwh is rendered by *ho theos*. A similar deviation is found in Moses' expectation in 4.1 of a sceptical response from them (although in the order to Moses in 3.16 *Kyrios* was used). Only much later, at the celebration of the release at the end of the plagues narrative, the name *Kyrios* is employed by Moses, and according to the narrative he is joined in this by the Israelites (15.1).

How should the initial restraint in the use of the divine name *Kyrios* be explained? As should already be clear, this has something to do with the recognition of the god concerned. Some clues to clarify this matter further are found at the transition in the use of the divine name, namely, in the divine discourse between the first confrontation with Pharaoh (ch. 5) and the start of the plagues (ch. 7). In *the discourse of ch. 6* we find some translation changes: '*Go and* say to the sons of Israel *saying* . . .' (6.6). In the place of *lākēn*, 'therefore', the imperative *badize*, 'go!' is used in Greek. This change is probably not simply a matter of misreading (Hebrew *lākēn* being read as *lek[-nā']*),[173] but primarily of choice, because the translator of Exodus should be considered competent.[174] This intentionality is also suggested by the addition of *legōn*, 'saying', to the speech introduction.[175] Adding 'go' to 'say' results in the formula 'go and say' and this makes the statement more

173. Le Boulluec and Sandevoir, *L'Exode*, p. 112; Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 75.

174. See Aejmelaeus, 'What Can We Know about the *Vorlage*', p. 100; similarly Le Boulluec and Sandevoir, *L'Exode*, p. 32; Wevers, 'Two Reflections', p. 29; Lemmelijn, *Plague of Texts*, p. 150.

175. Cf., however, the remarks of Aejmelaeus about the addition of *legōn*, in Aejmelaeus, 'What Can We Know about the *Vorlage*', p. 105.

a matter of a prophetic commission, whereas 'saying' simply underlines the importance of what has to be said. The message itself reads as follows:

> I [am] *Kyrios* and I will bring you out from the domination of the Egyptians, and I will rescue you from slavery, and I will redeem you by an uplifted arm and a great judgment. And I will take you for myself as my people, and I will be your god; and you shall know that I [am] *Kyrios* your god, who is about to bring (participle) you out from the oppression of the Egyptians' (6.6-7; cf. the rendering of the Hebrew text in Chapter 1, sec. 3).

This is a recognition saying (see Chapter 1, sec. 3). We may wonder what exactly the translator had in mind when emphasizing this message. In this connection, the changes in another recognition saying may provide a clue, a text that was bypassed in the previous discussion about the use of the divine names in the plagues narrative. According to the Hebrew text of 8.18/22, Pharaoh will know by a plague 'that I, Yhwh, [am] in the midst of the land'; however, the Septuagint text describes the aim as 'that I am *Kyrios*, the *(ho) kyrios* of the whole land / earth' (cf. 9.29 and also 19.5). The statement indicates that it is *Kyrios* and not Pharaoh who is finally in charge of Egypt.[176] The transition to the generic noun suggests in the given context that *Kyrios* is not just a name but that its meaning matters too: as lord this god stands in opposition to other lords like Pharaoh.[177] What is also significant is that the verse apparently connects the recognition of *Kyrios* and the occurrence of a plague.

In fact, the recognition saying of ch. 6 is found in a similar context. According to the beginning of the divine discourse in this chapter, God appeared to the ancestors 'but my name *Kyrios* I did not disclose to them' (6.3). The niphal of *yd'*, 'to make oneself known', has been translated by *dēloō*, 'disclose'.[178] Interestingly, this verb may mean 'reveal' (then the name itself is involved) but also 'explain' (then the meaning of the name is concerned).[179] This discourse therefore seems to suggest that according to the translator either the divine name has not yet been revealed or its meaning has still not been disclosed.

176. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 118.

177. Cf. Pietersma, 'Kyrios or Tetragram', p. 94: he quotes the connection as evidence for the originality of the occurrence of *Kyrios* in the Greek translation.

178. Muraoka, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v., p. 147: 'to make known, disclose'. Cf. sec. 3a above, last part.

179. J. Lust, E. Eynikel and K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, I (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992), s.v., p. 100; see also Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v., p. 222: '1. to make some matter known that was unknown or not communicated previously, *reveal, make clear, show*'; '2. to make someth. clear to the understanding, *explain, clarify*'.

If we connect these findings to the name issue in 3.13-15, then we are able to identify the problem that caused the changes in ch. 6. The existing Hebrew text of Exodus suggests that the question of the divine name and/or its meaning is raised and answered twice, once in ch. 3 and once in ch. 6. Since the translator liked consistency,[180] this must have bothered him. His solution is apparently as follows. The name *Kyrios* is proclaimed as the divine name par excellence from the very start. Already 3.16 used this name in the proclamation that should be delivered by Moses to the elders' council (*gerousia*) of the Israelites at his arrival in Egypt. The name *Kyrios* is also mentioned by Moses and Aaron at the beginning of their first audience with Pharaoh in 5.1. However, its meaning is disclosed only later, notably by means of the plagues.

This supposition explains very well the initial restraint in the use of the name *Kyrios* in Exodus. This solution raises, however, the question about how the first divine answer in 3.14a should then be understood. It might be taken as an answer only for Moses. A somewhat similar restriction occurs later when, in connection with the first meeting of Aaron, the name Yhwh is rendered by *Kyrios* (4.27-28), but by *ho theos* after that in relation to the people (4.30-31). This apparently indicates that Aaron may share in all the divine knowledge that Moses got according to the call narrative, but this does not apply right away to the people. However, the second answer in 3.14b argues against this interpretation of v. 14a: according to this answer Moses should communicate to the Israelites that *ho ōn* sent him. What matters more in my view is that the first divine answer sounds very general. The idea is apparently that its real meaning will become clear only later, through the intervention of the plagues. However, as preparation for this in general terms, *ho ōn* may mean at least 'being present, effective'.

The findings mentioned bear on the use of the divine names by Pharaoh and the Israelites. However, for the sake of completeness, it should be added that there are *many other deviations* in the renderings of the divine names. Certain tendencies may be observed in them.

- Rather strikingly, Moses uses the designation *ho theos* in response to the requests of Pharaoh to pray to *Kyrios* (8.25/29, 26/30; 10.18). This use is, of course, not a sign of Moses' ignorance. In this case the word *ho theos* does in all likelihood not function as the counterpart of the name *Kyrios*, but certain connotations of this word are exploited, notably its reference to the divine status of the one concerned, therefore to his exalted, superior position in relation to people. Some confirma-

180. See the main text in connection with n. 94 and n. 131, and the literature referred to in these notes.

tion of this interpretation may be found in the fact that in the cases of Moses' response in which the name *Kyrios* is employed the exclusivity of *Kyrios* is explicitly indicated (8.6/10; 9.29; cf. sec. 3b).

- Also in other instances of *ho theos* rendering Yhwh, God's superiority is probably stressed (9.5; 14.13). This also applies to passages where God's authority is disputed (16.7, 8; 32.30). Related are the cases that occur in the context of a communication with God. In connection with the establishment of the covenant and the theophany in ch. 24, *Kyrios* is used in relation to divine speaking, whereas human doing is connected with *ho theos* (cf. the reserve connected with seeing in the same context: 24.10, 11).[181] What is also noteworthy in this connection is the speaking about putting something or oneself *enanti(on)*, 'before/opposite *ho theos*' (16.9, 33; 28.29/23).
- In 13.21 Yhwh is rendered by *ho theos*. This may be attributed to a harmonization with 13.17, 18. Was that facilitated by the fact that in all these verses *ho theos* is used with a verb of movement? However, it would be more in agreement with the previous paragraphs to see the facilitating factor in the connotations of *ho theos*. In these verses God is closely linked to his people, and therefore the bond between a (this) god and a certain (this) people will be at issue here.
- In 22.10/11 *ho theos* is used, presumably because this designation distinguishes God better from worldly *kyrioi*, 'owners', in the immediate context.[182] Moreover, it is consistent with the preceding vv. 8 and 9.
- The rendering of Yhwh as *ho theos* in 6.26 may be rather surprising because it is connected with the divine command to Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Presumably this has to do with the more detached nature of vv. 26-27: they constitute a kind of explanatory comment on the preceding genealogy, and the command is in fact not repeated here by God but only referred to by the writer of this text. In this respect they are different from the verse that they resume and that precedes this genealogy, which has the character of a report (6.13).
- Most of the few instances in which *ʾelōhîm* is rendered as *Kyrios* are understandable as a matter of harmonization with other uses of that name in the context (3.4; 18.1; 20.1).
- In 13.19 *ʾelōhîm* is also rendered as *Kyrios* in a quotation of Joseph's words: 'by a look *Kyrios* will look (*episkopēi episkepsetai)* after you.' In my view, the sentence cannot be explained simply as a matter of referring back to the text of Gen. 50.24.[183] First of all, the syntactic construction of *episkeptein*, translated here by 'look after', calls to mind

181. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, pp. 379-80. Cf. also sec. 3b.
182. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 346.
183. Contra Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 205.

rather that of Exod. 3.16 (also missing *en tēi* and *hē* before and after *episkopē*, in contrast to Gen. 50.24). Moreover, in Gen. 50.24 (and also Exod. 4.31) only the title *ho theos* is found, whereas just before Exod. 3.16, in v. 15, the name *Kyrios* has been disclosed as the divine name par excellence. The use in 13.19 probably makes more explicit that the name *Kyrios* is associated with the gracious commitment of God to Israel.

- In ch. 19 the rendering of the divine names shows a thorough reworking: '[the] M[asoretic] T[ext] has Yhwh 18 times and *'elōhîm* three times, whereas Exod[us in the Septuagint translation] has *kyrios* nine times and *ho theos* thirteen times (one case of *kyrios* in v. 24 has no counterpart in MT).'[184] Some cases could be explained by the usual associations of these designations (the association of God with the people in the context of the making of a covenant in 19.7-8);[185] others, on grounds of harmonization (19.3; 19.18 [cf. vv.17, 19]; 19.21a).[186] However, in this case the distribution of the occurrences of the divine names appears to be more significant: vv. 1-8 have *ho theos* five times; vv. 9-13: *Kyrios* four times; vv. 14-19: *ho theos* three times; v. 20: *Kyrios* twice; vv. 21-22a: *ho theos* three times, with an obvious transition to an alternating pattern in v. 22: from then on we find *Kyrios—ho theos—Kyrios—ho theos—Kyrios*. The last instance of *Kyrios* in v. 24 is a peculiar addition because of the use of different designations in main and subordinate clauses: 'the priests and the people should not use force to go up to *ho theos* lest *Kyrios* should destroy some of them.' According to the distribution of the designations over the chapter, the turning point (marked by a preceding gradual decline in number before and an initial rise after) is obviously v. 20, which reports the arrival of *Kyrios* on the mountain. This turning point is clearly not situated exactly in the middle but more towards the end of the chapter. Presumably, this eccentricity indicates the preparatory nature of this chapter.

  Against the background of these well-reasoned changes, it is significant that in the immediately following chapter, ch. 20, the divine names of the Hebrew text are faithfully rendered. In the Decalogue, always *Kyrios* is found (whether or not followed by the apposition 'your god', 20.1-17); the passage about the fear of the people towards God reads *ho theos* (20.18-21), and then again *Kyrios* is found in the introduction

184. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 305. There he also explains these findings from 'a reluctance to mention *kyrios* in the interchange between God and Moses and so to use the neutral *ho theos* instead'. However, this does not explain all the findings, as Wevers himself also indicates.

185. Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 296.

186. For the first verse, see Wevers, *Notes on Exodus*, p. 293.

of rules against the making of gods and about the erection of an altar (20.22-26).

- Sometimes *Kyrios* and *ho theos* are combined into one designation as in the next statement: 'Who gave a mouth to a human being . . . , [is it] not I, *Kyrios ho theos*?' (4.11). This designation may call to mind the creation narrative of Genesis 2 (with the same double divine designation in the Greek translation). In any case, the addition *ho theos* underlines the superiority of *Kyrios*. The use in a regulation about the matzo-rite sounds like a confession. The Israelite should tell his child about the meaning of this rite: '[This is] because of what *Kyrios ho theos* did for me, when I was going out of Egypt' (13.8). The double designation may refer back to the recognition formula of 6.7, but *theos* is now used absolutely (linked with an article instead of a possessive pronoun). The absence of a superlative context will be the reason that it is not used in 9.30, unlike the Hebrew text. In the last instance in Exodus the motivation of the prohibition not to bow down to another god is formulated in a rather complex way in Hebrew: 'for Yhwh [is] jealous, [according to] his name, he [is] a jealous god' (34.14). It may also be read: 'for [as regards] Yhwh, his name [is] jealous, he [is] a jealous god.' This motivation becomes in Greek: 'for *Kyrios ho theos*, a jealous name, is a jealous god.' The jealous nature of God (cf. 20.5) seems to be transferred to his 'name': a 'jealous name' means presumably that it does not tolerate other big names besides it. The use of a double name agrees with this supposition; it seems to emphasize the absolute status of the one concerned.
- Note also the use of both divine names at the end of the plagues narrative: 'the people feared *ho Kyrios*, and they trusted *ho theos* and Moses, his attendant' (14.31). The Hebrew text has the name Yhwh in both places. The two different names in the translation constitutes a kind of hendiadys and therefore can be counted as an example of the double name (see the previous paragraph) divided over two places.

In sum, according to the main tendency of the translation changes in the divine names, it appears that the name *Kyrios* is associated with God's powerful intervention on behalf of Israel in Egypt. On the other hand, *ho theos* is employed either to indicate the unacknowledged status of this god, functioning as the negative, 'not-yet' counterpart of *Kyrios*, or to point to his superior, divine position. From this point of view, the association of *Kyrios* with the compassionate aspects of God, and of *ho theos* with his ruling aspects is rather superficial. Moreover, this position suggests an equivalence of the two terms, whereas (the anarthrous) *Kyrios* is in fact the pivotal signifier. It may be noted in passing that these conclusions also imply a criticism of Philo's conception of the two divine names.

As suggested above, the meaning of the specific divine 'name' (Yhwh/*Kyrios*) is presumably conceived along the lines of the 'recognition saying' as found in 6.6-7 and 8.18-19/22-23. Other occurrences of this saying in the plagues narrative (7.5, 17; 9.14, 29; 10.2; 14.18) may also have influenced the translator. Also the use in 16.32 of *Kyrios* instead of 'I' in connection with the bringing of the people out of Egypt may be an indication. The associations of *Kyrios* are, in fact, well epitomized by the opening words of the Decalogue: 'I am *Kyrios*, your god, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of slavery' (20.2). Since these opening words were in all probability well known to the translator, they may have directly influenced his understanding of the name *Kyrios*. Of course, this supposition is difficult to prove, although the remarkable pattern of the divine names in the preceding ch. 19 may be an indication of the importance of the Ten Words as a whole to the translator. In any case, the specific divine 'name' is connected by the translator with the liberation from Egypt.

4. *The Historical Context of the Translation (a Survey)*

The view that the statement of Exod. 3.14 in the Septuagint translation had a metaphysical meaning for the translator may be investigated from another point of view: the likelihood of such a view in relation to the environment in which this translation took place. This section can only summarize what is known or probable in this connection.

It is usually thought that the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch took place in Alexandria in the third century BCE. This idea is in fact inspired by the legend recorded in the *Letter of Aristeas* (see more about this book below).[187] More objective ways of dating the translation are based on the language of the text, the palaeography and radiocarbon assays of ancient text fragments. These methods result in a rather wide range of dates.[188] Other ancient works referring to the Septuagint translation (such as the *Letter of Aristeas*) or even quoting it are in principle also relevant, but their origin and dates are heavily debated. These pieces of evidence point to a date between rather early in the third century and late in the second century

187. Cf. Siegfried Kreuzer, 'From "Old Greek" to the Recensions: Who and What Caused the Change of the Hebrew Reference Text of the Septuagint?', in W. Kraus and R.G. Wooden (eds.), *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (SBLSCS, 53; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), pp. 225-37, esp. 236-37. Kreuzer suggests that the *Letter of Aristeas* was a reaction against the establishment of a proto-Masoretic standard text under Maccabean/Hasmonean rule.

188. For an impression of the varying assessments, see, e.g., Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 96, 97, 124 and 126, together with their notes (with references).

BCE (with a margin for the different books of the Pentateuch; the translation of Genesis is probably the earliest).

Philosophical Context. In this connection, it is noteworthy that Platonic philosophy did not occupy an important position from the end of the fourth to the first century. The Hellenistic age was the time of Stoic, Epicurean and Sceptic philosophy. Correspondingly, philosophical interest was predominantly ethical and practical.[189] Plato was still read, but his critical approach, his (aporetic) way of disputing opinions in the Dialogues, had become the focus of attention already at an early stage. His adherents were therefore of a sceptical kind and not particularly interested in his metaphysical ideas. In general, it may therefore be stated that Plato's fundamental philosophy found virtually no support in the third and second centuries BCE.[190]

In this period Athens was the most important centre of philosophy, and this was all the more true for philosophical thinking connected with the name of Plato. As for Alexandria, this city owed its reputation in a large part to the Library, in which philosophical and scientific works were collected from the third century BCE onward. The sciences in particular flourished in Alexandria, but philosophical activity there was only marginal for a long time. In the third century Eratosthenes of Cyrene lived in Alexandria. He had studied in Athens, and showed an affinity to Plato.[191] He was a philosopher, mathematician, geographer, philologist, and a Librarian; he became famous in particular for his calculation of the size of the earth. His mathematical interests had apparently been nurtured by Plato's late work. In line with this, he saw the world as founded on numerical proportions. However, he was apparently more materialistic (souls have a body; the sensual and cognitive aspects are connected). What is also significant is that after his arrival in Alexandria he focused his attention on scientific work. More-

189. See Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy*, III. *The Systems of the Hellenistic Age* (trans. J.R. Catan; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), esp. 369-76; Hellmut Flashar and Woldemar Görler, 'Die hellenistische Philosophie im allgemeinen', in Flashar (ed.), *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie—Die Philosophie der Antike*, IV/1. *Die hellenistische Philosophie* (Basle: Schwabe, 1994), pp. 3-28, esp. 4-8; Michael Frede, 'Epilogue', in K. Algra *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 771-97, esp. 776-78 (about Platonism).

190. In general (more than only about the Academy in Athens): Heinrich Dörrie, *Von Platon zum Platonismus: Ein Bruch in der Überlieferung und seine Überwindung* (RhWAW.G, 211; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1976), pp. 19, 23-24; for Alexandria, see P.M. Fraser, 'Alexandrian Philosophy: The Main Phases', Chapter 9 in Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 480-94, esp. 482-84.

191. See Klaus Geus, *Eratosthenes von Kyrene: Studien zur hellenistischen Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (MBPF, 92; Habil.; Munich: Beck, 2002), passim, esp. in reference to the following description in the main text: pp. 54-55, 146-47, 161-62, 186.

over, he had only a few followers, such as the philologist Aristophanes. In the second century the Librarians Aristophanes and Aristarchus edited the work of Plato—a fact of extraordinary importance for their survival—but, according to the available evidence, strangely enough their interest concerned only his style and diction.[192]

This philosophical climate changed at the beginning of the first century BCE when a work of Plato, the *Timaeus,* started to raise a widespread, religiously motivated interest (an interest also manifest in Philo later).[193] About the same time, Antiochus of Ascalon (who lived for some time in Alexandria) seems to have rediscovered the dogmatic side of Platonism (his adage was *veteres sequi*, 'follow the men of old').[194] Especially important for the reassessment of the metaphysical side of Plato's writings was in all probability Eudorus of Alexandria, who lived in the middle of the first century BCE. He combined in fact Platonic, Neopythagorean and Stoic ideas.[195] He postulated a transcendental first principle, called 'the One' or 'the Supreme God', above two others (the Monad/Form and the Dyad/Matter). In that respect he is presumably a direct predecessor of Philo.

To the previous considerations it should be added that the term *to on* was possibly also employed in Stoicism to the deity.[196] Therefore the use of *ho ōn* in Exodus may also have such a background. However, it is not likely that the Stoic conception of a divine breath pervading everything directly influenced the translator of Exodus. Of course, the term might have been picked up from mainstream philosophical discourse without much knowledge of its background or respect for it,[197] but if so, then the meaning of *ho ōn* to the translator can be assessed only from its use in the text.

192. See Dörrie, *Von Platon zum Platonismus*, pp. 21-23; Francesca Schironi, 'Plato at Alexandria: Aristophanes, Aristarchus, and the "Philological Tradition" of a Philosopher', *Classical Quarterly* 55 (2005), pp. 423-34.

193. Dörrie, *Von Platon zum Platonismus*, pp. 32-36.

194. Fraser, 'Alexandrian Philosophy', pp. 487-88; Dörrie, *Von Platon zum Platonismus*, pp. 14-15.

195. See John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, rev. edn, 1996), pp. 115-35, 436-38; Dörrie, *Von Platon zum Platonismus*, pp. 40-41; and now esp. Mauro Bonazzi, 'Eudoro di Alessandria alle origini del platonismo imperiale', in Bonazzi and V. Celluprica (eds.), *L'eredità platonica: Studi sul platonismo da Arcesilao a Proclo* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2005), pp. 115-60.

196. Freudenthal refers to this occurrence; see his 'Traces of Greek Philosophy', p. 220 note. It is not so sure whether the term *to on* was originally used in the quotation of Chrysippus or introduced by one of its transmitters. See now *Chrysippe: Oeuvre philosophique*, I (ed. R. Dufour; Paris: Les belles lettres, 2004), p. 597; cf. also the passage on p. 423 (where it is apparently introduced by transmitter Plotinus).

197. Cf. Morton Smith, 'Image of God', p. 474 note (in connection with the supposed Platonism of Exod. 3.14 LXX).

Therefore, given the spirit of the age and different from what is often thought, a Platonist background for the use of *ho ōn* in Exod. 3.14 is not probable; conversely, a Stoic provenance may be possible but does not say much.

The Testimony of Alexandrian Jewish Literature. Another avenue for assessing the spiritual climate of the Pentateuch translators is to study other early literary productions of Alexandrian Jews with philosophical links. Here only some of them can be discussed. The first will be the five fragments preserved from the Jewish philosopher *Aristobulus*.[198] He cautiously proposes a metaphorical (often called 'allegorical') interpretation of anthropomorphic descriptions of God, apparently introducing this idea into his Jewish environment. He presents Socrates, Plato and Pythagoras and Greek poets as having borrowed ideas from the books of Moses. Plato is even singled out in this respect, and this shows that he was an important figure in the eyes of the author.[199] However, the fragments preserved do not show any direct or indirect knowledge of Plato's work. By contrast, the so-called allegorical interpretation in them is attributed to Stoic influence.[200]

The *Letter of Aristeas* tells the story of how King Ptolemy II Philadelphus ordered the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek and how this was done by 72 learned 'elders' sent to Alexandria by the high priest at Jerusalem.[201] During a preparatory visit by an embassy of the king to Jerusalem, the food laws are explained in an allegorical way. At the preliminary meetings of the Jewish scholars with the king in Alexandria, philosophers are also said to be present. The advice the scholars give to the king is marked by Stoic influence (e.g. the idea that a king has to serve his people).[202]

198. See Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, III. *Aristobulus* (SBLTT, 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), pp. 128-97.

199. See frg. 3.1; cf. 2.4 and 4.4.

200. See Nikolaus Walter, *Der Thoraausleger Aristobulos: Untersuchungen zu seinen Fragmenten und zu pseudepigraphischen Resten der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur* (TU, 86; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), pp. 124-49.

201. See Moses Hadas (ed. and trans.), *Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas)* (New York: Ktav, 1973).

202. Russell E. Gmirkin suggests on the basis of many agreements between Aristobulus's fragments and the *Letter of Aristeas* that Aristobulus is also the author of the latter work. See Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (LHBOTS, 433; London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), pp. 77-80. However, the agreement is often only superficial as the matter of 'allegorical' interpretation shows. Moreover, in my view, such a conclusion should rather be based on an accurate comparison of the language used.

Aristobulus, but even more clearly the *Letter of Aristeas,* shared clearly the cultural ideals and text-critical interest of their Ptolemaic environment. This explains why they located, for instance, the birth of the Greek translation of the Pentateuch in the context of the Library at Alexandria.[203] However, internal evidence does not point in this direction. On the contrary, the language of the Pentateuch in this translation is clearly of a non-literary kind.[204] It is the popular language of the documentary papyri, mixed with Semitisms.[205] This makes a direct relationship of this translation with the Ptolemaic court or the Alexandrian Library improbable.[206] The particular use of some words such as *aposkeuē* even suggests that the social milieu consisted, for a significant part, of soldiers.[207] This is in agreement with what sources tell us about the provenance of the Jewish community in Alexandria.[208]

203. Thus Siegfried Kreuzer, 'Entstehung und Publikation der Septuaginta im Horizont frühptolemäischer Bildungs- und Kulturpolitik', in Kreuzer and J.P. Lesch (eds.), *Im Brennpunkt: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der griechischen Bibel*, II (BWANT, 161; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), pp. 61-75, esp. 68-70; Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, pp. 42-49, 119-43.

204. For a description of its linguistic features, see esp. Joosten, 'Le milieu producteur du Pentateuque grec', pp. 349-61, passim (with further references); and Joosten, 'Language as Symptom: Linguistic Clues to the Social Background of the Seventy', *Textus* 23 (2007), pp. 69-80.

205. In reference to the first aspect in particular, Natalio Fernández Marcos notes that 'the LXX and the New Testament would be the first writings intended for the people in plain language that everyone could understand'. See Fernández, *The Septuagint in Context* (trans. W.G.E. Watson; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), p. 8. Similarly Knut Usener, 'Die Septuagint im Horizont des Hellenismus: Ihre Entwicklung, ihr Charakter und ihre sprachlich-kulturelle Position', in Kreuzer and Lesh, *Im Brennpunkt,* II (see n. 203), pp. 78-118, esp. 87, 115. Such remarks may easily mislead, however, if only because in this case there were in all probability no scholars studying ordinary language in order to translate just into that language.

206. A different matter is how this language was experienced by its readers in antiquity. On the basis of his investigation Alexis Léonas suggests that it was perceived as hieratic language. See Léonas, *Recherches sur le langage de la Septante* (OBO, 211; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), pp. 248-49. There have also been, however, more critical voices such as Eusebius of Emesa, significantly of Syrian origin. See Jean-Pierre Mahé, 'Traduction et exégèse: Réflexions sur l'exemple arménien', in R.-G. Coquin *et al.*, *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux* (COr, 20; Geneva: Cramer, 1989), pp. 243-53, esp. 248-50; further R.B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis* (TEG, 6; diss.; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), pp. 106-12.

207. See Joosten, 'Le milieu producteur du Pentateuque grec', pp. 358-60 (cf. n. 172 above); also Joosten, 'Language as Symptom', pp. 76-79.

208. Sandra Gambetti, 'The Jewish Community of Alexandria: The Origins', *Henoch* 29 (2007), pp. 213-40.

5. The Early Reception History

Another approach to the rendering of Exod. 3.14 consists of examining how it was understood in the early period after its appearance. In this section an attempt will be made to trace the development of its interpretation.

The Exagoge *of Ezekiel.* The *Exagoge* retells the Exodus narrative in the form of a tragedy, and therefore shows clearly Hellenistic cultural influence. Fragments of the *Exagoge* have come down to us chiefly through Alexander Polyhistor (first century BCE) and Eusebius of Caesarea. The burning bush story is also recorded in it but unfortunately not the famous divine statement of Exod. 3.14. Whether that is an accident of the history of tradition or whether it was missing from the beginning is not clear. The fact that the fragments do not show any interest in a description of the divine in itself but only in his acts and intentions argue for the latter possibility. With regard to Exod. 3.14a, a certain sentence in the account of the call narrative nevertheless catches the attention. God says to Moses: 'I am here to save (*pareimi sōsai*) my people of the Hebrews.'[209] The use of the word *pareimi* is rather striking. It is used instead of the more active *katebēn,* 'have come down' (*exelesthai . . . ek cheiros Aigyptōn*) in the Septuagint. Although the *Exagoge* does not deal with *egō eimi ho ōn*, it is nevertheless noteworthy that this description of God is in line with the interpretation of the statement given in the previous sections. However, what is most important to us is that the *Exagoge* clearly shows that even in a Jewish Hellenistic environment an interest in Exodus 3 other than a metaphysical–ontological one is possible.

Jeremiah LXX. In the Septuagint translation of Jer. 1.6; 14.13; and 32/39.17, the participle *ho ōn* occurs in a compound form of address to God, *ho ōn (despota) Kyrie*; whereas at the corresponding place in the Hebrew text, the interjection *'ahāh* is found as part of *'ahāh ('adōnāy) Yhwh*.[210] It is nowadays assumed that in this context the consonantal word form *'hh* of the interjection was linked by the translator to another divine name, namely, *'ehye* of

209. Thus frg. 9. See Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, II. *Poets* (SBLTT, 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press), p. 371; Pierluigi Lanfranchi, *L'Exagoge d'Ezéchiel le Tragique: Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire* (SVTP, 21; orig. diss.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), p. 203.

210. For a discussion of the manuscript evidence (also in relation to 4.10, dealt with in the next paragraph), see Robert A. Kraft, 'Notes and "Probes,"' in Kraft (ed.), *Septuagintal Lexicography* (SBLSCS, 1; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 2nd edn, 1975), pp. 153-78, esp. 175; Emanuel Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch* (HSM, 8; diss.; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 24; and Tov and S. Talmon, 'A Commentary on the Text of Jeremiah—I. The LXX of Jer. 1:1-7', *Textus* 9 (1981), pp. 1-15, esp. 13-14.

Exod. 3.14 (only the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *yod,* had to be added to the other consonants), and in agreement with this text translated as *ho ōn*. Because this translation was founded on a misinterpretation, in principle we cannot infer something specific about the theological view of the translator.[211]

However, in Jer. 4.10 only one late manuscript (ms. 16 / Kat. 280) gives *ho ōn* as the rendering of *'hh*; in the rest of them it is translated with the interjection *ō*. The rendering of *'hh* is often different elsewhere in the Septuagintal books but is in some passages the same (2 Kgs / 4 Kgdms 3.10; 6.5, 15). How can the anomalous situation of 4.10 be explained? It is now often assumed that also in 4.10 the rendering had originally been *ho ōn*, but that this was subsequently corrected. It could be, for instance, that this concerned a correction on the basis of the original Hebrew text. However, the question is then why this happened only here in a widespread way but elsewhere only very incidentally (one or two testimonies for each of the passages concerned). Another possibility would be that the original rendering was *ō*, but in one case a scribe corrected it, perhaps rather automatically, because the other verses were resonating more or less in his mind, in particular the preceding *ho ōn* of 1.6. This solution has the beauty of simplicity, but even in this case the deviation of 4.10 in comparison to the other texts remains to be explained.

The cause of the deviant testimony of the manuscripts in 4.10 may be found in what immediately follows after the address to God. The prophet says subsequently: 'how have you greatly misled this people and Jerusalem saying: "Peace will happen to you", and see: the sword has reached as far as their life!' Apparently, Jeremiah attributes the false prophecy of other people to God (quite similar to the case in 1 Kgs 22.22)! Since the verb *einai* and even more its nominalized participle were closely linked to the notion of truth (see sec. 2a, second part; cf. sec. 1), we may suppose that *ho ōn* was not used in 4.10 in order to avoid a harsh clash between the accusation of deception and the reference to God as trustworthy. It may in principle be possible that already at a very early stage a scribe changed *ho ōn* in this verse into *ō* with a view to this.[212] The other possibility is that the translator of Jeremiah had already used *ō* there for this reason. There are some other

211. Thus, rightly, Joosten, 'Une théologie de la Septante?', pp. 45-46 (but at the same time he also observes that the translator sees apparently the prophecy of Jeremiah in continuity with the revelation of the Pentateuch).

212. Cf. Peter Katz in his review '*Septuaginta* . . . , ed. Alfred Rahlfs . . . [1935]', *TLZ* 61 (1936), cols. 265-87, esp. 286: 'Zweifellos liegt 4,10 [mit einstimmig überliefertem *ō*] eine alte Glättung vor.' However, he does not elaborate on the nature and background of this 'Glättung'.

translation changes in favour of the latter explanation.[213] In this respect it is significant that in some other passages the Septuagint translation of Jeremiah tones down accusations against God.[214] One instance concerns the same issue as 4.10. In 15.18, the designation of God as 'false (fake) water' is no longer associated with God but to the wound that is felt by the prophet. What is also important is that Jeremiah's prophecy got shape in his confrontation with other prophets and that the translation of the book explicitly designates them—and there for the first time—as '*pseudo*-prophets'. Therefore, also in this case the translator shows a certain sensitivity to truth in the matter of prophecy.

Wisdom of Solomon. In the book of *Wisdom*, the last book included in the Greek Old Testament, *ho ōn* is also found as a divine designation. It occurs within a passage that has exercised an enormous influence on theological thinking. We read in 13.1 the following sentence: 'futile / illusionary (*mataios*) are all people . . . who are ignorant of God; from all visible good things they were not able to know him who is (*ho ōn*) nor, by observing his works, have they discovered the craftsman (*technitēs*).' The designation *ho ōn* here does not have a clear connection with the Exodus narrative, although the passage follows rather soon after a commentary on that narrative (10.15–12.2). This suggests that it had already become a current title of God. Another possibility is that the author picked it up from the Exodus narrative but employed it, out of the context, as a specific divine designation. In both cases it may be asked why exactly the designation is used here; what function does it have in this context?

To the author it is evidently a strange paradox that the vision of the 'good things' does not lead to the knowledge of *ho ōn*. But why is that so strange to him? We can infer it from the next verses: through reasoning by analogy (13.5) people are thought to be able to come to something that is more eminent (13.4). The underlying reasoning seems to be that the goodness of the things concerned supposes a divine maker just as an artful product does in relation to a human craftsman. What matters here is therefore God's

213. It may be noted that within the translation of Jeremiah *ho ōn* could be conceived as contrasting with the 'who are not (*ontes*) gods' (5.7; cf. 2.11; 16.20). Thus Evangelia G. Dafni, '*Oi ouk ontes theoi* in der Septuaginta des Jeremiabuches und in der Epistel Jeremias: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Werdegang des sogenannten Alexandrinischen Kanons', in J.-M. Auwers and H.J. de Jonge (eds.), *The Biblical Canons* (BETL, 163; cong.; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2003), pp. 235-45, esp. 236, 241-42. Rather peculiarly, this article takes its interpretive starting-point not primarily in translation changes but in the Greek text as a whole.

214. See A.R. Pete Diamond, 'Jeremiah's Confessions in the LXX and MT: A Witness to Developing Canonical Function?', *VT* 40 (1990), pp. 33-50, esp. 37-38.

existence. But the question of his existence is obviously brought forward in a wider context.

The other side of not recognizing *ho ōn* behind the 'visible good things' and the 'craftsman' behind the 'works' is, according to v. 2 (introduced by the conjunction *alla*, 'but'), the 'considering' (*nomizein*) of elements and celestial bodies 'as' gods. The 'visible good things', therefore, correspond with elements and celestial bodies, and the non-recognition of *ho ōn* behind these things coincide with their divinization. As a consequence, *ho ōn* contrasts with the semblance and delusion ('considering as') of the divinization of those things (likewise 12.24, 27; 13.10; 14.8, 15; 15.8, 15) and is therefore connected with truth.[215] This has already been prepared by speaking in 12.27 of 'the true god' in contrast with considering things as gods.

It was particularly in reasoning by analogy and the natural theology connected with it that Wisdom 13 had a big impact on theology.[216] As for the use of *ho ōn*, this term is associated with truth (as 'the one who is true'), as in Jeremiah, but the concept of truth involved is different in the two cases, in agreement with the different contexts. In the Greek translation of Jeremiah the notion of truth is in line with its conception in the Hebrew Bible as reliability and trustworthiness,[217] whereas in Wisdom truth is connected with the state of facts.

Philo. Insofar as is verifiable by the extant texts, it was *Philo* who first directly connected Exod. 3.14 and Greek philosophy, in particular that of Plato.[218] However, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter (see sec. 1),

215. Contra, e.g., C. Larcher, *Le livre de la Sagesse ou la Sagesse de Salomon,* III (EtB, n.s. 5; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1985), p. 753: '*ho ôn* renvoie à Celui qui existe absolument, possède l'être en plénitude et apparaît, à ce titre, comme le principe de toute existence et de toute perfection créées.' By interpreting the divine designation in Wisdom in a similar way as Philo does with Exod. 3.14, Larcher makes too much out of its use there.

216. See, e.g., Siegfried George, 'Der Begriff *analogos* im Buch der Weisheit', in K. Flasch (ed.), *Parusia: Studien zur Philosophie Platons und zur Problemgeschichte des Platonismus* (Festschrift J. Hirschberger; Frankfurt a.M.: Minerva, 1965), pp. 189-97; Bogdan Poniży, 'Gotteserkenntnis nach dem Buch der Weisheit 13,1-9', in M. Augustin and K.-D. Schunck (eds.), *'Wünschet Jerusalem Frieden'* (BEATAJ, 13; cong.; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1988), pp. 465-74; Walter Vogels, 'The God Who Creates Is the God Who Saves: The Book of Wisdom's Reversal of the Biblical Pattern', *Église et théologie* 22 (1991), pp. 315-35; John J. Collins, 'Natural Theology and Biblical Tradition: The Case of Hellenistic Judaism', *CBQ* 60 (1998), pp. 1-15.

217. Cf. Alfred Jepsen, s.v. *'āman*, *TDOT,* I, pp. 292-323, e.g., 313.

218. J.P. Martín expresses the initial reservation more in detail: the ontological exegesis of Exod. 3.14 could have started before Philo in the Jewish Hellenistic school but in his work we meet the first observable testimonies. See Martín, 'La primera exégesis ontológica de "Yo soy el que es" (Exodo 3,14-LXX)', *Stromata* 39 (1983), pp. 93-115, esp. 102.

even his interpretation of this verse is more diverse and nuanced than often assumed. Besides indicating the absence of a divine proper name, the divine statement points, according to Philo, to God's existence (in contrast with his essence), to the presence of truth on his side or to the idea that (stable and lasting) Being belongs only to him. Only the last of these interpretations is clearly metaphysical by nature (nevertheless, all of them have an ontological aspect). Philo, therefore, exploited a possibility provided by the letter of the Greek translation. Because of his Platonist affinity this should not surprise us. In this respect it is noteworthy that a century later such an interpretation of the text was repeated by the Platonist philosopher Numenius, possibly independently from Philo. This philosopher, who showed some sympathy for Jewish religion and knowledge of the Old Testament, used the designation *ho ōn* for his 'First God'.[219]

Josephus. A metaphysical–ontological interpretation was, nevertheless, not a matter of course from the time of Philo onwards, as Flavius Josephus (37–c. 100) already shows. In his account of the narrative of the call of Moses, Josephus relates only that God revealed his name to Moses but that he—Josephus—is not permitted to speak about it (*Ant.,* i.e. *Jewish Antiquities,* 2.276). However, in his description of the battle of the prophet Elijah with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (cf. 1 Kings 18) and the aftermath of it at Horeb (1 Kings 19), Josephus expresses himself in a way that pertains to the matter investigated here. In relation to this, it should first be observed that Josephus generally speaks cautiously about other gods and religions, presumably in order not to offend his Gentile readers.[220] Thus he presents apostasy in Israelite history only as an abandonment of ancestral customs (e.g. *Ant.* 4.139; 8.190). However, in his account of the Elijah narratives he obviously gives up this attitude. The beginning of the Horeb episode refers back to the reception of the laws there through Moses (*Ant.* 8.349). A certain 'unseen voice' asks Elijah why he has come there. He gives as reason that 'he had killed the prophets of the foreign gods and convinced the people that only god (*monos theos*) is the One who is (*ho ōn*)' (*Ant.* 8.350;

219. See John Whittaker, 'Moses Atticizing', *Phoenix* 21(1967), pp. 196-201; also *Phoenix* 32 (1978), pp. 144-54; M.F Burneat, 'Platonism in the Bible: Numenius of Apamea on *Exodus* and Eternity', in van Kooten, *Revelation of the Name* (see n. 17), pp. 139-68, esp. 145-49.

220. See Gerhard Delling, 'Josephus und die heidnischen Religionen', *Klio* 43-45 (1965), pp. 263-69; John M.G. Barclay, 'Snarling Sweetly: Josephus on Images and Idolatry', in S.C. Barton (ed.), *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), pp. 73-87. See also *Ant.* 4.207, referring apparently to Exod. 22.28 LXX (cf. sec. 3c, third part).

cf. 1 Kgs 19.10).[221] The designation *ho ōn* obviously identifies the one who is 'only god'. Moreover, the contrast of the only God and the other gods is clearly reminiscent of the contrast made by the people in their response to the result of the fire ordeal on Mount Carmel: the Israelites 'paid homage to the one God, calling him the greatest and only true one (*alēthē monon*), whereas the others [were but] names, made by simple/worthless (*phaulos*) and thoughtless/foolish (*anoētos*) opinion' (*Ant.* 8.343). In the context of this contrast, *ho ōn* clearly means existence and, as a consequence, the possibility of acting.

Revelation. Also the book of Revelation is quite interesting in this connection. In 1.4 we read a tripartite expression: 'Peace to you from (*apo*) him who is (*ho ōn*) and who was and who is to come' (see further 1.8; 4.8; cf., bipartite, 11.17; 16.5). The use of the nominative (*ho ōn*) instead of the genitive (*tou ontos*) after the preposition *apo* marks the quotation-like nature of the formulation.[222] Against this background, the first term must refer directly to Exod. 3.14; the other two have been adapted on the basis of the first. In this connection they may be understood as elaborations to clarify that God's being spans the different times. As such, the phrase is an example of the tripartite temporal formula (*Dreizeitenformel*), known from Greek and rabbinical sources (cf. the bi- and tripartite ones noted in sec. 3a, first part).[223] It is noteworthy that in this formula 'who will be' has been replaced with 'who is to come', with obvious christological connotations. This replacement gives the formulation as a whole a more active aspect. At least by this change, the formulation does not suggest a strictly timeless being of God. In this respect it is also significant that *ho ōn* has a parallel in the first element of an apparently derivative tripartite elucidation: '[I am] the living one (*ho zōn*), and I have been dead and, look, I am up to the ages of the ages' (1.18).

The remaining early texts with *ho ōn* are less interesting. A passage in the *Sibylline Oracles* (1.137) refers to Exod. 3.14a, but the only thing that can be deduced from the enigmatic context is that the divine statement is con-

221. This and the following translations of Josephus have been influenced by that of Christopher T. Begg in *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary,* V. *Judean Antiquities Books 8-10* (ed. S. Mason; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), *ad loc.*

222. J.H. Moulton, W.F. Howard and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1919), sec. 62d; G.K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 324-27.

223. See Sean M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos: Rev. 1:4 in its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting* (WUNT, 2/107; orig. diss.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1999), pp. 41-57; 176-192 (with references).

sidered to be a prestigious one, one that indicates God's exalted position. Another passage suggests with the aid of a tripartite formula, in rather general terms, that the sovereign god has manifested himself as eternal (3.16: 'being [now] and being before but [also] again and hereafter'). The connection of the designation *ho ōn* with Exod. 3.14a in other texts (4 Macc 5.24; *SibOr* 3.33) is even less clear (both passages with *ōn* as attributive in relation to *theos*) and therefore their mention suffices here.

The preceding outline of the reception history indicates that the Greek translation of Exod. 3.14a became interpreted in a metaphysical way only in the course of time, namely, with Philo, but that even after that this interpretation was not a matter of course.

6. *Final Considerations*

(1) Let us first review the methodical aspects of the main part of this chapter (secs. 2 and 3). The basis of the interpretation of the Septuagint translation of Exod. 3.14a was a linguistic approach.[224] Within this context, a study of the text of the translation, notably an investigation of its grammar and syntax, was an important starting point (sec. 2a). Only after that was this translation viewed against the background of the Hebrew original, and was it in particular examined whether there may have been linguistic reasons for deviating from it (sec. 2b). Such an approach does not completely exclude, however, the possibility of an investigation of the meaning the statement had for the translator. Nevertheless, because of the many linguistic reasons found for the translation change, this issue has to be approached in the context of other translation changes. In particular a pattern of deviation in these changes may point in the direction of a certain concern of the translator, a concern that can be more or less related to the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a as it is rendered. With a view to this, different kinds of translation changes related to the divine names were studied (sec. 3). In this way the context was reconstructed from which in all probability the translator understood the particular translation of Exod. 3.14a.

(2) Let us now summarize the findings of the main part of this chapter (secs. 2 and 3) in relation to Exod. 3.14a and subsequently evaluate them:

(a) On the basis of the construction of the sentence, the articular participle *ho ōn* can be understood in a vital, an existential or a metaphysical sense. Because the sentence does not consist of an impersonal proposition, a veridical meaning is not self-evident.

224. See also van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, pp. 78-79: his order of the different phases of investigation shows similarities but also some differences (esp.: the text-critical aspect is not considered here).

(b) Most probably, the reason why the participle *ho ōn* is employed in vv. 14a and 14b is first of all to avoid the strangely sounding use of a finite form of *einai* as subject in v. 14b; v. 14a is subsequently adapted to v. 14b. Besides this, other factors played presumably an important part too: the (also elsewhere strongly attested) wish to avoid a lack of clarity in the translation; the possibility in Greek of interpreting the effect of the idem per idem construction as a matter of intensification (which made the adaptation of v. 14a easier); and a smooth transition to the standard rendering of the specific divine name, *Kyrios,* in v. 15. Seen in this way, there is no need to understand the rendering of v. 14a as the result of interpreting the Hebrew original on the basis of the congruence rule for predicative relative clauses, as sometimes is done, an interpretation that would also be unlikely from a sense of the language formed by Greek.

(c) Since the translation *ho ōn* is apparently connected with the rendering of the divine name by *Kyrios*, the rather many deviations from the standard renderings of *'elōhîm* by *ho theos* and *Yhwh* by *Kyrios* are interesting inasmuch as they tell us something about the meaning the term *Kyrios* had for the translator. It appears from these deviations that *Kyrios* is connected with the identity of God and with knowledge of it, whereas *ho theos* is linked with ignorance of God's identity. Some deviations have to be explained otherwise; for instance, the use or avoidance of *Kyrios* occasionally has to do with the underlying appellative ('lord'; 8.18/22; 22.10/11), whereas the use of *ho theos* serves rather often to emphasize the superior, divine status of the one concerned. A further step can be taken by paying attention to the fact that the change in the use of the divine names, globally speaking, takes place with the divine speech in ch. 6. From this and from translation changes connected with recognition formulas in 6.7 and 8.18/22, it may be postulated that to the translator the identity of *Yhwh-Kyrios* was connected with his intervention as exodus-god, his powerful action on behalf of the people of Israel in Egypt through the plagues. From this it may also be supposed that the main changes in chs. 1-15 have to do with the double occurrence of the divine name as an issue, once in Exod. 3.13 and once in 6.3. In his wish to create clarity, the translator differentiated: in 3.14-15 the specific divine name is first of all proclaimed; in ch. 6 its specific meaning is subsequently disclosed. In line with this, the interpretation of the divine 'name' Yhwh-*Kyrios* given in Exod. 3.14 should be understood as a preparatory revelation of this specific meaning.[225] It can

225. Note that this view shows a striking resemblance to the interpretation of the relationship between Exodus 3 and 6 in the Hebrew text given by Christopher Seitz, 'The Call of Moses and the "Revelation" of the Divine Name: Source-Critical Logic and its Legacy', in Seitz, *Words without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 229-47, esp. 238-39 and 243-45.

therefore be extrapolated that the participle *ho ōn* in Exod. 3.14 refers only in general terms to the effective presence of God ('I am *the one who shows himself to be there*').

(d) The handling of the divine names has a striking parallel in texts about seeing God. In both cases, inconsistencies and obscurities in the source text have been smoothed away by the translator as contrary to what he took to be the intention of the text (but always sticking to the letter of the text as much as possible). References to 'seeing' God are avoided until ch. 33 and in this way adapted to *Kyrios*' dictum there that no one can see him without dying (see sec. 3b). In relation to the divine names, this concern results in a clarification of the relationship between the disclosure of the divine name *Kyrios* in ch. 3 and that in ch. 6. Such adaptations are the result of exegetical labour on the book of Exodus. That labour provides in the end evidence of a 'canonization' of this book, its appreciation as (a part of the) Holy Scripture.[226]

(3) On the basis of these findings it is possible to say something about the background of the rendering of Exod. 3.14a in the Septuagint.

(a) The findings refute the idea that the use of the participle *ho ōn* in Exod. 3.14 is connected with Hellenistic philosophical thinking ('I am the *Being*'). Nothing in the translation of Exodus favours the idea of God as the true Being behind the stage of this world. Moreover, the history of ideas (see sec. 4) and the results of tracing back the history of reception (cf. sec. 5) make a metaphysical–ontological meaning improbable too. The rendering of Exod. 3.14a was exploited in this sense only much later, by Philo. The view that a considerable continuity exists between the original intention of this verse in the Septuagint translation and its ontological–metaphysical interpretation by Philo should therefore also be rejected.[227]

To prevent misunderstandings: if dependence on Hellenistic philosophical thinking is denied here for Exod. 3.14, that does not mean that there were no influences from the Hellenistic environment on the translator. For instance, the translation of *lēb*, 'heart', in some of its occurrences by *dianoia*, 'mind' (as the faculty of thinking, 9.21) rather than the literal translation *kardia* (always used in relation to Pharaoh, from Exod. 4.21 until 14.17)[228] suggests an image of human beings more or less different from that in the Hebrew Bible.

226. Cf. Wevers, 'Translation and Canonicity', esp. pp. 295, 302.

227. Contra, e.g. (see also n. 46), Dietmar Wyrwa, 'Über die Begegnung des biblischen Glaubens mit dem griechischen Geist' (Habil.), *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 88 (1991), pp. 29-67, esp. 39-40: he says, among other things, that Philo 'die noch schwachen Spuren der Septuaginta auszieht'.

228. *Dianoia* is also used in 35.29, *kardia* in 25.2; 31.6; 35.5,21; both are well attested in 35.10/9 and 36.2 in the manuscripts.

(b) If we look for another source of inspiration, then a background in the major prophets and Hosea seems more probable.

- A first investigation on the level of words and collocations suggests that the translator is familiar with the major prophets and Hosea.[229] The peculiar change of 'man of war' in Exod. 15.3 into 'the one who breaks the war' is connected with prophetic visions according to which Yhwh 'will break the bow, the sword and the war' (Hos. 2.20/18; similarly Ps. 76/75.4).[230] Other resemblances are also noteworthy: 'I shall open your mouth' (4.12, 15) instead of 'I shall be with your mouth' is reminiscent of the same expression in Ezek. 3.27 (at the end of Ezekiel's call narrative!); the reading 'the god of the Hebrews has called us' instead of 'has occurred to us' in Exod. 3.18 and 5.3 may have been influenced by the statement 'from Egypt I called my son' in Hos. 11.2.
- What is most striking are the similarities in the positioning of Israel's god. As we have seen, there are translation changes emphasizing his exclusivity similar to statements in Deutero-Isaiah: 'besides *Kyrios* there is nobody' (Exod. 8.6/10); '[there] will be for you no other gods beyond me' (Exod. 20.3; see sec. 3c, first part). On the other hand, the other gods are reduced to an affair of their worshippers (see the same section), which is found throughout the major prophets (e.g. Isa. 44.9-20) and Hosea.
- Parallels to the Septuagint rendering 'I am the one being' in Exodus are found especially among the 'I am'-statements of Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 40-55). Isaiah 43.10-11 runs as follows: '(you are elected to know) that I [am] the One (*'anî hû'*): before me no god was formed and after me not any will be (there). I, I [am] Yhwh, and besides me there is no saviour.' The closest parallel is found in Isa. 52.6: 'Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore on that day [they shall know] that I [am] the

229. This does not mean that they were present to him in the form in which they are present to us. Harry M. Orlinski suggests for instance that the chapters of Isaiah 36-39 were not present in the Hebrew *Vorlage* to the (later!) Greek translator of Isaiah because the translation of them deals differently with anthropomorphisms than the translation of the rest of Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah. See Orlinski, 'The Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators', *HUCA* 46 (1975), pp. 89-114, esp. 107 note. It may even be questioned whether at the time of the Exodus translation the first and second part of Isaiah had already merged together.

230. Cf. also 'break the bow', in Jer. 49.35; in another context in Hos. 1.5. See Larry Perkins, '"The Lord is a Warrior"—"The Lord Who Shatters Wars": Exod 15:3 and Jdt 9:7; 16:5', *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 40 (2007), pp. 121-38. Perkins demonstrates convincingly that the translational context requires interpreting Exod. 15.3 'as a statement of Yahweh's ability to win battles for his people' (p. 121).

one speaking: 'Look, me!' (*hinnēnî*, translated literally).[231] As in Exod. 3.13-14, the elements of speaking by God and the affirmation of his presence occur together with a reference to the divine name. The later rendering in the Septuagint version of this affirmation of presence by *pareimi*, 'I am there', confirms the possibility of such an interpretation (e.g. by someone such as the Exodus translator). Because the wordings of Exod. 3.14 in the Greek translation and of Isa. 52.6 are different, we cannot, however, connect them directly.

(c) It should also be noted that the meaning attributed to the divine statement in the Septuagint agrees to a certain extent with a paraphrase found in early rabbinic tradition (Cf. Chapter 2, n. 95). In one way of rendering, the statement in v. 14a and the divine designation in v. 14b are only transliterated, either in both cases (Targum Onqelos) or in one of them (Targum Neofiti 1: only in v. 14a). In another way of translating, a part is connected with creation (Targum Neofiti 1: v. 14b; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: v. 14a) or linked to eternity (in the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan the designation of v. 14b is rendered by means of a bipartite formula; see sec. 3a, first part). However, in the first Talmud tractate *Berakhot* we also find reference to God's abiding presence with his people: 'I was with you in this servitude and I will be with you in the servitude of [other] kingdoms' (9b). A similar interpretation is found in the *Midrash Rabbah* (attributed there to two rabbis of the third century CE). Whether a dependence on it can be established is doubtful; but in any case, according to the interpretation given, the Septuagint translation of Exod. 3.14a shows congeniality with this early rabbinic tradition.

(d) It is striking that just an Alexandrian Jew, as the translator is generally supposed to have been, linked the revelation of the meaning of the divine name from the very start to the exodus from Egypt. His understanding of *Kyrios* as exodus-god may be inspired by the well-known introduction to the Decalogue (20.2): 'I am Yhwh/*Kyrios*, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves/slavery.' His meticulous rearrangement of the divine names in the preceding chapter could indicate the importance he attached to this Decalogue. Presumably, he was a pious Jewish rabbi who had a negative attitude to his religious environment in Egypt (see sec. 3b, c). He may have been thinking of a new exodus comparable to the vision of Deutero-Isaiah.

(4) The previous considerations dealt with what the translator meant by his translation of Exod. 3.14a. A different question is how Exod. 3.14 was

231. Isaiah 52.6 is often seen as a later addition; see the commentaries.

interpreted by its first readers. In all probability, these readers approached the text in a way different from the methods applied in the previous sections. They will have read it in a linear way, from the beginning to the end. As such they will have read the verse in the context of the narrative of Moses' call; this means, among other things, reading it after Exod. 3.7-12, which deals with God's proclamation of the exodus from Egypt, and possibly also taking into consideration the verses immediately after it. Their reading will also, however, have been influenced by ideological and cultural associations. It was this factor that caused, for instance, Philo to separate Exod. 3.14 from v. 15.

It is difficult to say something definitive about the associations of the very first readers. However, on the basis of reception history—along with the history of ideas—at least the metaphysical–ontological interpretation can be excluded as improbable. A survey of the early reception history of the text (sec. 5) pointed out that this interpretation developed only later, namely, with Philo, but, moreover, that even after him such an interpretation was not a matter of course.

(5) It may certainly be doubted whether the Greek translation renders the Hebrew text well. It simplifies the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a considerably, to say the least. However, as a reference to the effective presence of God, it should also be noted that its reading is remarkably consistent with the exodus motif of the first part of the book. In this respect the translation resembles many modern translations and interpretations.[232] If only for this reason, it deserves a revaluation instead of the usual denunciation.

In this connection it may be added that the results of the present study of Exod. 3.14a (including those of Chapter 2) present a rather ironic reversal of prevailing views. As already related in the introduction of this chapter, the Greek translation is usually contrasted with the Hebrew original as referring to an abstract being instead of a concrete and active presence. In fact, the Hebrew original, by referring to the unforeseen and surprising nature of God, is rather abstract, whereas, by contrast, the Greek translation points to the effective presence of God on behalf of his people in trouble.

(6) Let us finally evaluate the metaphysical interpretation of Exod. 3.14. This will be done in the light of a discussion of this verse and its history by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005).[233] In the introduction to

232. Cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6e, the first but also the second part (insofar as the statement is understood in the sense of an 'abiding presence').

233. See Paul Ricoeur, 'From Interpretation to Translation', in Ricoeur and A. LaCocque, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* (trans. D. Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 331-61.

this chapter it was noted that a metaphysical, or at least ontological, interpretation of Exodus was common in the history of exegesis. Nowadays, exegetes often simply oppose the meaning of the Hebrew source text to the ontological interpretation associated with the Greek translation. Ricoeur attempts to mediate between these two positions. As he rightfully notes, we should not think that we can simply bypass the history and have immediate access to the original meaning of the text, if not the intention of the author.[234] According to my impression, a new interpretation of a text springs from the experience of a discrepancy between the text and existing interpretations, an experience that may be promoted among other things by large differences among these interpretations. Ricoeur suggests further that the divine statement exceeds its narrative framework, and its metaphysical interpretation should be understood as a working out of this excess in meaning.[235] In my view, the answer the statement gives is quite suited to the problem of the question of v. 13, but, indeed, the answer is so fundamental that its implications reach far beyond the actual situation presupposed by the text.

In addition, Ricoeur points out that the history of ontological interpretation has been very varied[236]—indeed too varied to be dealt with here. Here only Philo's position will be recapitulated, on the basis of the treatment at the beginning of this chapter (sec. 1). In his interpretation Philo obviously takes certain features of the biblical text into account, such as the difference between Moses' question and God's first answer, although he interprets them subsequently within his own frame of reference. He also indicates the indefinite nature of God's characterization by the statement, for he notes that God's nature is such that he cannot be predicated, cannot be qualified more precisely.[237] Although Philo takes the Greek translation as his point of departure, surprisingly his connection of the divine statement with transcendence does even more justice to the Hebrew text than the Greek translation and its modern counterparts, for the Hebrew text points to God's otherness, that he exceeds our ideas about him. This divine transcendence is emphasized in Philo by the use of alpha privatives, such as *a-katalēptos* ('incomprehensible'), which deny that God can be understood as such, in contrast with contemporary metaphysical thinking.[238] The problem, how-

234. Ricoeur, 'From Interpretation to Translation', p. 332.

235. 'From Interpretation to Translation', pp. 335, 337, 341.

236. 'From Interpretation to Translation', pp. 338-52.

237. Strikingly enough, from a comparative point of view Vriezen states something similar in connection with the Hebrew source text; see Vriezen, '*'Ehje ʾašer 'ehje*', p. 510 (see Chapter 2, n. 94, in this volume).

238. See Janet Martin Soskice, 'Athens and Jerusalem, Alexandria and Edessa: Is There a Metaphysics of Scripture?', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* (online journal) 8 (2006), pp. 149-62, esp. 154. See also David T. Runia, 'The Beginning of the End: Philo and Hellenistic Theology', in D. Frede and A. Laks (eds.), *Traditions*

ever, is Philo's stratified model of the deity, in which the highest level concerns God in himself, connected with being as being and with unknowability, and the lowest divine level relates to the divine powers intervening in the world. In this way Philo too greatly isolates God's transcendence, his otherness, from his activity in the (sensual) world.

What is also noteworthy is Ricoeur's suggestion that the results of modern exegesis invite a new expansion of the concept of being.[239] If we do not do that, we ignore the wide impact of the divine statement and confine the 'Judeo-Christian heritage' to cultural and social marginalization.[240] Ricoeur points in particular to the translation of Buber and Rosenzweig: 'I shall be-there as the one who I shall be-there' (*Ich werde dasein als der ich dasein werde*), and the notion it implies: God as Being-there.[241] It may be asked whether Ricoeur is not thinking too much in continuity with the old concept of being. Nevertheless, the question should indeed be raised of what the divine statement basically means in relation to the concept of being.

This last issue will be a subject for another chapter. Before it, attention will be paid to some later stages in the translation of Exod. 3.14.

of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath (PhA, 89; cong.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), pp. 281-316, esp. 303-4 (Philo's position is 'symptomatic of the end of Hellenistic theology').

239. 'From Interpretation to Translation', pp. 335, 337 (note), 341, 360, 361.

240. 'From Interpretation to Translation', pp. 357, 359.

241. 'From Interpretation to Translation', pp. 361.

5

Other Remarkable Phases in the Translation History of Exodus 3.14a

A translation tries to say the same thing in a different language. Because languages differ from one another, a translation is at the same time a first interpretation of a text, which, however, also determines how this text is subsequently understood. How complicated the relation between translation and interpretation may be was illustrated in the previous chapter on the rendering of Exod. 3.14a in the Septuagint. It showed a major gap between its original meaning and the metaphysical interpretation with which this rendering was almost identified after some time. Nevertheless, the fact that a translation admits in principle several interpretations remained obvious by the subsistence of other interpretations besides this dominant interpretation.

In the present chapter other crucial phases in the translation history of Exod. 3.14a will be investigated. First of all, attention will be paid to versions that used the Septuagint as source text, the so-called daughter translations. How these ancient versions handled the Septuagint translation of Exod. 3.14 will be investigated. And so the concern of this chapter is different from the (more usual) text-critical interest in reconstructing the original Greek text from these versions or sometimes even the original Hebrew text. Ultimately, the interest is how they interpreted the text, but this can often not be established. Following this discussion, the rendering of Exod. 3.14 by the Vulgate will be dealt with. Although in principle based on the Hebrew text, this rendering appears to be strongly influenced by the Septuagint too.

Finally, early modern Western European versions will be investigated insofar as they were based on the Hebrew text. The specific question will be how they rendered Exod. 3.14 and to what extent they meant a shift in the understanding of the biblical text in comparison with the dominant traditional interpretation that was closely connected with the Septuagint and the Vulgate. In this connection the medieval vernacular translations based on the Vulgate cannot be passed over. The question is to what extent they already revealed a change in understanding and how much they influenced

early modern translations. That is why they will be dealt with too; this will occur immediately after the discussion of the Vulgate translation.

1. *Daughter Versions of the Septuagint*

Given my limited knowledge of the historical languages and cultures involved, the investigation of the daughter translations of the Septuagint cannot be exhaustive but will be only a beginning. Fortunately, however, this investigation has often profited from remarks of scholars much more competent in these matters.

Some daughter translations have to be left out of consideration because, unfortunately, Exod. 3.14 is lacking in the extant material. Of the Palestinian Aramaic version, in particular lectionary texts, biblical texts used in liturgy, have survived. This accounts for the absence of Exod. 3.14 in this version.[1] Of the Gothic translation of the Old Testament only some parts of Nehemiah have been discovered. Therefore, Exod. 3.14 in the Gothic translation has also not been preserved. Moreover, to my knowledge, it has not left any trace in history.[2]

In this section, the daughter translations have been divided according to the question of whether their explanation requires only syntactical considerations or also tradition-historical ones. In the latter case their treatment requires more space. The former group of daughter translations will be dealt with first. The order of their treatment agrees with that of the syntactical considerations about the Septuagint translation in Chapter 4.

a. *Daughter Versions Requiring Only Syntactical Considerations*

The Old Ethiopic Version. The Old Ethiopic *(Ge'ez)* version (date unclear, presumably from the fourth to sixth century) translates the Septuagint rendering of Exod. 3.14a in a rather simple way: *'ana w^{e}'^{e}tu za-hallo*, 'I [am] he who is.'[3,4] The verb form *hallo* is the 'perfect' form of *hallawa*, 'be',

1. Cf. Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff (eds.), *A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*, I. *The Christian Aramaic Old Testament and Apocrypha Version from the Early Period* (Groningen: Styx, 1997).

2. Concerning Exodus as a whole, there may be only an after-effect of the translation of Exod. 21.22-23 LXX in the form of rather liberal abortion legislation among the Visigoths initially. See Marianne Elsakkers, 'Gothic Bible, Vetus Latina and Visigothic Law: Evidence for a Septuagint-based Version of Exodus', *Sacris Erudiri* 44 (2005), pp. 37-76.

3. For the introductory data of this version, see, e.g., Rochus Zuurmond, 'Ethiopic Versions', in D.N. Freedman *et al.* (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, VI (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 808-10; G.A. Mikre-Sellassie, 'The Early Translation of the Bible into Ethiopic/Geez', *The Bible Translator* 51 (2000), pp. 302-16.

4. See J. Oscar Boyd (ed.), *The Octateuch in Ethiopic*, II. *Exodus and Leviticus* (Bibliotheca Abessinica, 4; Leiden: E.J. Brill; Princeton, NJ: University Library, 1911),

'exist', and can indicate both the present and the past; therefore it can be rendered by 'is' as well as by 'was'.[5] In Ge'ez a present active participle is missing, and that is why a free relative clause substitutes for it (such a clause also has a nominal function).[6,7] In the translation the statement of v. 14a is adequately resumed in the message of v. 14b by *za-hallo*.[8]

The Coptic Versions. The *Sahidic* Coptic version (third century; Sahidic was the main dialect of southern Egypt) reads at Exod. 3.14a: *anok pe petšo'op*.[9] The verb form *šo'op* is the 'stative' form (indicating a state) of *šōpe*, 'becoming' or 'being'.[10] The word *pe* is a deictic pronoun that has a copulative function here, while *et* serves as a relative complementizer (a conjunction that marks a complement clause). What is important is the presence of the definite article *p(e)* before *et* because this makes the statement a nominal sentence with a free relative clause (its absence would indicate a cleft sentence).[11] In all probability, the sentence has a descriptionally identifying function: 'I am the one who is.'

Verse 14b reads: *petšo'op pe ńntafńnoou šarōtń*. The use of the pronoun *pe* and the relative particle *(e)nt* is striking, not least in comparison with

p. 7 (this edition, based on six mss. of Exodus, does not give variants for v. 14a in the critical apparatus).

5. See, e.g., Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Classical Ethiopic (Ge'ez)* (HSS, 24; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), sec. 14.2, p. 61 (cf. also p. 404); Josef Tropper, *Altäthiopisch: Grammatik des Ge'ez* (ELO, 2; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2002), secs. 44.583 and 51.5 (both with Exod. 3.14a).

6. See Tropper, *Altäthiopisch*, secs. 41.5 (about *za*) and 44.351 (no present participle in Ethiopic); Lambdin, *Classical Ethiopic*, sec. 25.1d, pp. 106-7 ('the nominalization of relative clauses is very frequent').

7. See also Reinier C.J. Smits, *The Relative and Cleft Constructions of the Germanic and Romance Languages* (diss.; Dordrecht: Foris, 1989), p. 43 (a free relative 'is a clause which by itself functions as a nominal expression in the sentence').

8. According to Boyd, *Octateuch in Ethiopic*, p. 7, the manuscript R (Haverford ms.) puts *w^{e}'^{e}tu*, 'he', before this phrase.

9. See Rodolphe Kasser, *Papyrus Bodmer XVI: Exode I-XV,21 en sahidique* (Cologne/Geneva: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1961), p. 46; P. Nagel, 'Sahidische Pentateuchfragmente', *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 114 (1987), pp. 134-66, esp. 147 (Papyrus BL Or 7561[49]); for Exod. 14a, see also H.J. Polotsky, 'Nominalsatz und Cleft Sentence im Koptischen', *Orientalia* 31 (1962), pp. 413-30 (also in *Collected Papers* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1971], pp. 418-35), esp. 427 (cf. p. 422).

10. See Chris H. Reintges, *Coptic Egyptian (Sahidic Dialect): A Learner's Grammar* (Cologne: Köppe, 2004), sec. 6.2.2e.

11. See Chris H. Reintges, Anikó Lipták and Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng, 'The Nominal Cleft Construction in Coptic Egyptian', in K.É. Kiss (ed.), *Universal Grammar in the Reconstruction of Ancient Languages* (SGG, 83; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 105-35, esp. 115. Cf. Polotsky, 'Nominalsatz und Cleft Sentence', esp. pp. 414, 420 (also about Bohairic).

other daughter translations. In this case, we apparently have an instance of a cleft sentence with a specificationally identifying function: 'It is the one who is, who has sent me to you.' It should be added that the statement of v. 15a reads in the same way: *pčoeis . . . pe ńntafńnoou šarōtń:* 'The Lord . . . is the one who has sent me to you' (cf. also v. 16 with a similar cleft construction, and further v. 18 and 5.3). There is in all probability a simple reason for the use of the cleft construction in these answers: in the scene depicted by Moses in v. 13 the Israelites asked for the divine name; the cleft sentences in vv. 14b and 15a subsequently indicate that *petšo'op* and *pčoeis*, respectively, are the answers to this question. Moreover, the use of the same cleft construction stresses the connection between these answers even more than in the original. The cleft construction has apparently a clarifying function.

According to the *Bohairic* translation (somewhat later than the Sahidic one, translating in the dialect of the Delta region), Exod. 3.14a reads *anok pe phetšop*; 3.14b, *phetšop pe etafaomoi afōten*.[12] The two divine utterances have in fact been translated in the same way as in the Sahidic translation.

The Syro-Hexaplaric Version. The *Syro-Hexapla* is a Syriac-Aramaic translation based on the revised Septuagint column in the *Hexapla* of Origen. This translation was made by Paul of Tella in Egypt at the beginning of the seventh century. He belonged to the Syrian Orthodox (monophysite) Church. His version was used especially within this community.

The Syro-Hexapla must be distinguished from the older (possibly already existing in the second century CE) and more widespread *Peshitta*, a Syriac translation based on the Hebrew text. The Peshitta gives only a transliteration of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a (*'ahyah 'ašar 'ahyah*) and the divine designation of v. 14b (*'ahyah*) (see also n. 85 below). In that respect it stands in the same tradition as Targum Onqelos. In both cases the transliteration suggests that they understood the statement of v. 14a and the designation of v. 14b as names (and therefore as direct answers to the question of v. 13). However, this way of rendering did not prevent someone like Ephraem the Syrian in *Hymns against Heresies* 16.11-12, from connecting Exod. 3.14 with *'itūtâ,* 'being', and therefore interpreting it along the same lines as was done with the verse in the Septuagint translation.[13]

12. See Melvin K.H. Peters (ed.), *A Critical Edition of the Coptic (Bohairic) Pentateuch*, II *Exodus* (SBLSCS, 22; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 6-7; also Polotsky, 'Nominalsatz und Cleft Sentence', p. 422.

13. See Ute Possekel, *Evidence of Greek Philosophical Concepts in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian* (CSCO, 580; Subs 102; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), pp. 55-59. In this respect Syria does not appear to be so free from Hellenistic influence. Contra Janet Martin Soskice, 'Athens and Jerusalem, Alexandria and Edessa: Is there a Metaphysics

The Syro-Hexapla reads in v. 14a *'enā 'itǎy hw d-itāw(hy)*, which is resumed in v. 14b by *d-itāw(hy)*.[14] The syntax of the sentence is rather complicated in this translation, indeed one of the most complicated of the daughter translations of the Septuagint.[15] The particle *'it* may have a copulative, a locative, or an existential function.[16] The first *'it* has a pronominal suffix and is preceded by a co-referential independent pronoun (both *-ǎy* and *'enā* refer to the same person). Such a sequence is also found elsewhere.[17] Because of the combination with a pronominal suffix and the connection with a nominal predicate (in the form of a relative clause, see next paragraph), this *'it* has a copulative function. The second *'it* may cause uneasiness because of the unusualness of its pattern. It is combined with a pronominal suffix but not connected with a predicate. In fact, there are more instances of this pattern: the subject is then definite (in relation to the context) and its (absolute) existence is affirmed (or just denied by means of a negation).[18]

of Scripture?', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* (online journal) 8 (2006), pp. 149-62, esp. 160.

14. See Antonius Maria Ceriani, *Monumenta sacra et profana*, II. *Pentateuchi Syro-Hexaplaris quae supersunt cum notis* (Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, 1863), pp. 137-38; Paul de Lagarde, *Bibliothecae syriacae* (Göttingen: Horstmann, 1892), p. 52; Arthur Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla: A Fac-Simile Edition of a Midyat Ms.* (CSCO, 369; Subs 45; Leuven: Secrétariat du Corpus CSO, 1975), fol. 21.

15. This is presumably the reason why it has been translated with 'Ich bin der Seiende der ist.' See Eberhard Nestle, 'Jakob von Edessa über den Schem hammephorasch und andere Gottesnamen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Tetragrammaton', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 32 (1878), pp. 465-508, esp. 499.

16. See esp. Takamitsu Muraoka, 'On the Syriac Particle *iṯ*', *Bibliotheca orientalis* 34 (1977), pp. 21-22. For a survey of the usual syntactic patterns of *'it* and their function in Classical Syriac, see W.T. van Peursen, *Language and Interpretation in the Syriac Text of Ben Sira: A Comparative Linguistic and Literary Study* (MPIL, 16; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), p. 338. With regard to Exod. 3.14 it is important that he divides existential uses further inasmuch as they refer to situated existence or to absolute existence (after the example of G. Goldenberg, 1983—see n. 22 below).

17. Dr W.T. van Peursen of the Peshitta Institute of Leiden University, with whom I corresponded about the syntax of Exod. 3.14 Syh, suggested to me the syntactical interpretation mentioned; for other instances he referred to Konrad D. Jenner, 'The Use of the Particle *'it* in the Syro-Hexaplaric Psalter and the Peshitta', in M.F.J. Baasten and W.T. van Peursen (eds.), *Hamlet on a Hill: Semitic and Greek Studies* (Festschrift T. Muraoka; OLA, 118; Leuven: Peeters/Department of Oriental Studies, 2003), pp. 287-308, esp. 302-303, cf. 303-306 (the same elements in a different order). According to Jenner, such clauses would mostly be of a contrastive nature; some, however, are 'descriptive' (i.e. either predicational or descriptionally identifying in the terminology used in this book; see Chapter 2, secs. 6b and 6c).

18. This would reflect a later stage in Syriac. See Na'ama Pat-El, 'Syntactical Aspects of Negation in Syriac', *JSS* 51 (2006), pp. 329-48, esp. 344 (survey), 346; see also 52 (2007), p. 185 ('corrigendum'). She speaks of (what might be confusing) a 'per-

Another question concerns the pronunciation and function of the constituent *hw*. Current editions of the Pentateuch point to its vocalization as *haw*, therefore, to its use as a demonstrative pronoun.[19] It then functions as the prop-antecedent of the relative clause (as the formal representation of the relative in the main clause).[20] This function is certainly not unusual, although the presence of the particle is not a syntactic necessity.[21] In this case the sentence is understood as descriptionally identifying (*'enā*, 'I', as topic; the subordinate clause, *d-itāw*, as focus), therefore as 'I am the one who is.'

In principle the consonantal text also admits the pronunciation of *hw* as *(h)u*; in that case it would function as (enclitic) third-person pronoun. Could such an understanding of the particle also be grammatical? In literature about Syriac syntax there are (a) several examples of *'it* followed by *(h)u* and even (b) some cases of *'it* followed by *(h)u d-*, but in all these cases *'it* lacks the pronominal suffix and has then obviously an 'existential' function.[22] Nevertheless, this literature indicates at least that *'it* and *(h)u* can go together. As such, this construction may be compared with other nominal clauses where a personal pronoun such as *'enā* is followed by the focalizing particle *(h)u*.[23] Seen in this way, the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a can be described as specificationally identifying (*'enā* or *'enā 'itǎy* as focus; the subordinate clause as topic), and therefore may be translated as 'It is I who am [and not others].' It remains to be seen, however, whether this interpretation of Exod. 3.14 has ever been exploited by Syrian theologians. This question falls, however, outside the scope of this study.

sonal existence' expressed by the pattern, but explains, more clearly, that in this situation 'the subject is a personal pronoun or a *definite* noun' (italics mine). For many instances of this pattern, see Edmund Beck, 'Grammatisch-syntaktische Studien zur Sprache Ephräms des Syrers (Schluss)', *Oriens christianus* 69 (1985), pp. 1-32, esp. 7-9 (V. *īt* + VI. *dě*) (Beck himself is inclined to explain these cases from metre, but this view does not apply to his examples from prose).

19. Lagarde does so by a horizontal A-sign (*pᵉtoḥo*); the other editions mentioned above by a diacritical dot above the consonant.

20. For the term 'prop-antecedent', see Smits, *Relative and Cleft Constructions*, p. 46 ('they are only present to fulfil a need, often a syntactic need, for an antecedent, not because of any referential content').

21. For examples see Beck, 'Grammatisch-syntaktische Studien', pp. 14-15.

22. See (a) Gideon Goldenberg, 'On Syriac Sentence Structure', in M. Sokoloff (ed.), *Arameans, Aramaic and the Aramaic Literary Tradition* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1983), pp. 97-140, esp. 122-23; and (b) Beck, 'Grammatisch-syntaktische Studien', p. 1; Muraoka, '*it̲*', p. 22 note, respectively.

23. In this juxtaposition a suggestion made by van Peursen is followed. For the function of *(h)u* as focalizing particle, see, e.g., the chapter about so-called 'Cleft Sentences' in van Peursen, *Language and Interpretation*', pp. 372-77 (with further references).

The Vetus Latina. The *Vetus Latina* or *Old Latin* version is the Latin translation based on the Septuagint (probably existing since the second century). It reads in Exod. 3.14a: *ego sum qui sum*. Some sources have the addition of *semper* ('always').[24] Perhaps this is an attempt to render the imperfective aspect of the Greek participle (cf. Chapter 4, sec. 2b, first part). Against the background of the Septuagint, the use of the first person *sum* in the relative clause may seem strange. The use of *sum* in the relative clause has, however, a specific syntactic reason: it is simply an instance of congruence, in which the finite verb of the free relative clause agrees in person with the subject of the main clause.[25,26] The *ego sum qui sum* of the Vetus Latina should therefore be translated into English as 'I am [the one] who *is*.' This interpretation is affirmed by the relative clause in v. 14b. Since within the message of v. 14b it is no longer related to the first person, the relative clause *qui sum* from v. 14a is resumed there as *qui est*.

It may be added that, as in many other languages, the Vetus Latina uses a free relative clause for the rendering of *ho ōn* and therefore not a participle. The reason is simply that the old participle of 'being', *sons,* was no longer suitable because it had acquired the meaning of 'guilty' (this development was at the origin of the word 'sin', 'Sünde'!).[27] Only later was the neologism *ens* constructed as a participle for philosophical–theological purposes.[28]

24. See Samuel Cramer-Naumann, *Gott als geschehende Geschichte: Die elohistische Interpretation JHWHs als des Kommenden im 'ehye 'ăšer 'ehye von Ex 3,14* (diss.; Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1993), p. 151 n. 32 (referring to a letter of W. Thiele concerning the future VL-edition of Exodus); see also William R. Arnold, 'The Divine Name in Exodus iii.14', *JBL* 24 (1905), pp. 107-65, esp. 118-19.

25. See, e.g., William Gardner Hale and Carl Darling Buck, *A Latin Grammar* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1966 [orig. 1903]), p. 177: 'When the Subject is a Relative, the Verb follows the Person of the Antecedent: *adsum qui feci*, 'here am I, who did it' (Aen. 9.427).' For a similar rule in Hebrew, see Chapter 2, sec. 6b, second part.

26. There is thus no reason to suppose Hebrew influence here as there may sometimes be for other texts. For the latter issue, see Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, *The Vulgate as a Translation: Some Semantic and Syntactical Aspects of Jerome's Translation of the Hebrew Bible* (diss.; Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1968), pp. 40-41; more extensively, Matthew [A.] Kraus, 'Hebraisms in the Old Latin Version of the Bible', *VT* 53 (2003), pp. 487-513.

27. The fact that the word 'sin' is cognate with 'being' enticed David Daube to give an article written by him the following humorous title: 'Pecco Ergo Sum'. See *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 4 (1985), pp. 137-43.

28. On this subject, see Mario Puelma, 'Die Rezeption der Fachspache griechischer Philosophie im Lateinischen', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 33 (1986), pp. 45-69, esp. 61; Robert Coleman, 'The Formation of Specialized Vocabularies in Philosophy, Grammar and Rhetoric: Winners and Losers', *Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain* 15 (1989) (cong.), pp. 77-89, esp. 80-81; A. Zimmermann,

b. *Daughter Translations Also Requiring Tradition-Historical Considerations*

The Armenian Version. The Armenian translation (usually dated in the first half of the fifth century) is striking because of an addition not found in the Septuagint: *es em* astuac *or ē-n*, 'I am *the god* who is.'[29,30] In this sentence *ē* is a finite verb form (Armenian does not have a present participle for the verb of being);[31] the final letter *-n* is an indication of definiteness (an enclitic article; see below). This statement is resumed by only *or ē-n* in the message of v. 14b, and therefore the addition *astuac*, 'god', is lacking there. How should the peculiarity of the translation be explained?

The first question has to be whether the translation has been inspired by its *source text.* The background of the Armenian version is generally sought in a Syriac (esp. the Peshitta) or a Greek (the Septuagint) translation.[32] It is impossible for me to investigate this question of source in a larger part of the Bible, for instance, in the book of Exodus. If we confine ourselves to Exod. 3.14, then the background is most probably the Septuagint and not the Peshitta (the rendering of which consists of a transliteration; see sec. 1, excursus). However, that background does not explain the presence of the word *astuac* in the translation of Exod. 3.14.

The addition *astuac* might have been occasioned by 4 Maccabees 5.24 or some passages in Philo.[33] The books of the Maccabees and the writings of Philo are known to have been popular among the first Armenian writers.[34]

s.v. 'Sein, Seiendes', in J. Ritter and K. Gründer (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, IX (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), esp. col. 186.

29. See Andranik S. Zeyt'unyan (ed.), *Girk' Elic'* (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences & Matenadaran, 1992), p. 52. All references to the text of the Armenian version of Exod. 3.14 relate to this critical edition of Exodus. In this and other editions such as that of Zohrab *astuac* is written with a capital.

30. Also Wevers notes this particularity in the critical apparatus of his edition of the Old Greek translation. See John William Wevers, *Exodus* (Septuaginta, 2.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), p. 85 ('+ *deus* Arm').

31. See, e.g., Hans Jensen, *Altarmenische Grammatik*, (Heidelberg: Winter, 1959), sec. 292.c; M.Ó. Coiġneallaiġ, 'On Verbs of Being in Classical Armenian,'', in J.W.M. Verhaar (ed.), *The Verb 'Be' and its Synonyms*, III (FoundLang.Sup, 8; Dordrecht: Reidel, 1968), pp. 44-52.

32. See, e.g., the discussions (related to a specific Bible book!) in Claude E. Cox, *The Armenian Translation of Deuteronomy* (orig. diss.; UPATS, 2; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 301-27, esp. 320-27 (no demonstrable Syriac influence); S. Peter Cowe, *The Armenian Version of Daniel* (UPATS, 9; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 229-89 (positive about the idea of a prior translation from Syriac).

33. Philo, *Leg* 3.38; *Agr* 52; *Spec* 1.31 (344).

34. Concerning Maccabees, see Robert W. Thomson, 'The Maccabees in Early Armenian Historiography', *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975), pp. 329-41. He writes that the first three

The fourth book of the Maccabees has not come down to us in an Armenian translation but may have been known to the translator of Exodus in one form or another because of its influence in Christian antiquity (of course, the probability of this supposition should be verified by finding echoes of this book in other Armenian writings).[35] In the texts mentioned, the order of the words found in Greek is different (e.g. *ton onta theon* in 4 Macc. 5.24), but a translation into Armenian would demand the order present in the rendering of Exod. 3.14.[36] However, although such occurrences in literature may have facilitated the addition of *astuac* in Exod. 3.14, they do not explain why it is used there.

We can also look at whether the peculiarity of the translation of Exod. 3.14 has *a grammatical reason.* Armenian translators sometimes render a participial phrase in Greek by a noun and a relative clause. In particular they insert a noun as antecedent (head noun) in the case of contradictory syntactic and grammatical constraints: the relative pronoun has a syntactic function in the main clause different from that in the subordinate clause; and, moreover, this difference expresses itself in a difference in the case form of the relative pronoun.[37] However, this is not the situation of Exod. 3.14. The use of the antecedent can also be related to other particularities of the Armenian relative pronoun. The relative pronoun '*or*' at the beginning of a free relative clause often refers to persons, but not always.[38] When pointing

books of the Maccabees were known to early Armenian writers in an Armenian translation (p. 330). As regards Philo, see Abraham Terian, *Philonis Alexandrini de Animalibus: The Armenian Text with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (orig. diss.; SHJ, 1; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 3-25.

35. For the influence of this book in Christian antiquity, see David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, 4; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998), pp. 143-55 (with references). Moreover, according to one manuscript, it is mentioned as a canonical writing by Anania of Shirak; see Michael E. Stone, 'Armenian Canon Lists II—The Stichometry of Anania of Shirak (c. 615 – c. 690 C.E.)', *HTR* 68 (1975), pp. 253-60, esp. 254, 255, 257, 258 (is the difference between 1100 stichoi in Anania's list and 1000 in the Codex Claramontanus—related to the Greek version—also not an indication of the existence of an Armenian translation?).

36. The Syriac translation of 4 Maccabees renders 5.24 by: 'it [the Law, see v. 21] also teaches us to fear God (*'alāhā*) truly so that [it is] him (*d-l-haw*), who is (*d-huyu*) only (him) (*balḥodāw[hy]*) god, [who] we worship in a magnificent way.' See R.L. Bensly, *The Fourth Book of Maccabees and Kindred Documents in Syriac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), *ad loc.* Therefore, (indirect) dependence on this translation is improbable.

37. See Vlàd Bănăţeanu, *La traduction arménienne des tours participiaux grecs* (Bucharest: Librăriă Àcàdemică, 1937), p. 90 (all examples are from Luke, the corpus investigated: 2.18, 33; 8.34; 16.20, 21).

38. Contra what Jensen seems to suggest; see Jensen, *Altarmenische Grammatik*, sec. 227.a.

to an object, it is frequently found at the head of (direct) object clauses (as *z-or*; see, e.g., Exod. 4.12; 10.6) and sometimes at the beginning of subject clauses (e.g. Exod. 9.20, 21; 21.15, 17).[39] It even occurs occasionally as the initial word of nominal predicate clauses.[40] Therefore, a translation *es em or ē-n* may mean not only 'I am [he] who is' (identifying) but also 'I am what is' (predicational / characterizing). There is an alternative for the relative pronoun *or* in Armenian, *o/ov*, which is specifically used for referring to persons. However, this is not often used (in the nominative case, for example, it is used only as an interrogative pronoun in Exodus; see 4.11; 10.8; 16.7) and also has the disadvantage that it may be rather indefinite or generalizing.[41] This last feature also applies, however, to *or* (see, e.g., 9.20, 21; 21.15, 17). Although the picture is not completely clear, the data on hand strongly suggest that the translator avoided the use of only a relative pronoun because that would have been unclear and solved the problem by making the antecedent of the relative clause explicit. Such an operation is not needed in Exod. 3.14b because there the relative clause occurs in the wake of Exod. 3.14a.

One might also question whether the insertion of an antecedent in the translation was occasioned by the wish to avoid confusion about the nature of the sentence construction. The straightforward translation of *egō eimi ho ōn* in v. 14a would be *es em or em*, therefore with a congruent relative clause. For the congruence rule for predicative relative clauses also exists in Armenian.[42] A clear example is 1 Chron. 21.17, translated with *es em or meław-n* (first-person singular aorist middle-passive + article), 'I am the [one] who has sinned.' An example in Exodus is the famous introductory sentence of the Decalogue: 'I am [the] Lord (*Tēr*), your god, who has brought (*hani*, first-person singular, aorist active) you out of the land of

39. For other examples, see Martiros Minassian, 'L'article du premier terme non substantivé d'une subordonnée en arménien classique', *Le Muséon* 101 (1988), pp. 97-158 (the various occurrences are scattered over the article).

40. By using the Greek translation of the computer program BibleWorks (7th version, 2007) as point of departure and subsequently consulting the edition of the Armenian version by Zohrab (at the Titus Internet site of the University of Frankfurt: http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de), only some instances were found, all of them TH-clefts in the NT (Matt. 15.20; Mk 7.15; Acts 2.16).

41. Charles de Lamberterie, 'L'article dans la relative en arménien classique', in E. Crespo and J.L. García Ramón (eds.), *Berthold Delbrück y la sintaxis indoeuropea hoy* (cong.; Madrid: Ediciones de la UAM; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1997), pp. 311-26, esp. 315.

42. This rule is, however, not mentioned in current Armenian grammars, such as Jensen, *Altarmenische Grammatik*; Robert W. Thomson, *An Introduction to Classical Armenian* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1975); Rüdiger Schmitt, *Grammatik des Klassisch-Armenischen* (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität, 1981).

the Egyptians, from the house of servitude.' However, *es em or em* could mean not only 'I am the [one] who is' but also 'I am who I am.' A problem with this supposition is that, to my knowledge, we do not know much about the status of the idem per idem construction in Classical Armenian. Did it already exist as an indigenous construction or was it first introduced by translations such as that of the Greek Bible? Its instances in the Greek Bible are in general rendered faithfully,[43] but in principle this only proves the receptivity of Armenian to this sentence type. However, the translation of one instance suggests more. The idem per idem sentence in 1 Cor. 15.10 is rendered with *em z-inč' ew ic'em*, 'I am whatever I may be.' The Armenian translator interprets it completely as a matter of indefiniteness, although the context argues against it (see Chapter 4, sec. 2b, fourth part). This suggests, therefore, an inclination of the translator to render the construction in this sense. This finding is all the more significant because the translation of 1 Cor. 15.10, besides that of Rom. 9.15, must belong to the very first renderings of the idem per idem construction into Armenian.

In sum, there are enough reasons to think that for the sake of the clarity of the sentence construction *astuac* was added in the translation.

Since linguistic factors explain sufficiently the peculiarity of the translation, it is impossible to determine whether ideological or theological views also played a part in its genesis (cf. the introduction of sec. 3 in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, we may ask ourselves how the divine statement was interpreted. Let us first look to *indications in the reception history* and notably what variants found in some manuscripts tell us.

The variants are relatively many, but different in nature. For our purpose the omission in one manuscript (K2: Jerusalem No. 297) of the message of v. 14b and the speech introduction and message commission of v. 15a is hardly interesting because this is obviously the result of a jumping forward of the eye from one word to the same word later in the text (i.e., haplography), and therefore a technical error. In only one manuscript (J6: Erevan No. 209) is *astuac* missing, although such a correction according to the authoritative Greek text would be expected. Interestingly, one manuscript (E2: Vienna No. 71) has the addition *p'oxarēn*, 'on the other hand', 'by contrast', between *es* and *em*.[44] This addition suggests a discrepancy between God's first answer and the question put by Moses. If we understand the relative clause in a restrictive sense and therefore read the statement as 'I am, however, the god who is', then this addition makes sense because this

43. For the posterior (relative clause) type, see notably Exod. 33.19 (also Rom. 9.15); 1 Kgdms 23.13; 2 Kgdms 15.20; 4 Kgdms 8.1.

44. What is comparable in the Septuagint is only the occurrence of *de* in the speech introduction in Exod. 3.14a in some minuscle mss. See Wevers, *Exodus*, p. 85.

divine answer does not answer the request for the divine name in v. 13 but only states that he is.

Some manuscripts (G1+5;[45] again J6) have *ēr-n* in Exod. 3.14b instead of *ē-n*. Therefore, they read 'who is' in v. 14a, and 'the [one] who *was*' in v. 14b. This could be attributed to the influence of the bi- or tripartite temporal formulas in the book of Revelation (see Chapter 4, sec. 5), but this is improbable because in the place of the Greek imperfect *ēn* a present tense form is used in the Armenian version.[46,47] The source of the variant

45. 'G15', according to the critical apparatus of Zeyt'unyan (see n. 29). In correspondence about Exod 3.14 Arm, Prof. Dr J.J.S. Weitenberg, until recently professor of Armenology at Leiden University, called my attention to the fact that 'G15' does not exist and suggested that this symbol may refer to both G1: Venice No. 12; and G5: Venice 8. In general Zeyt'unyan would refer to such a combination by means of a vertical stroke: G1|5. Thanks to the suggestions, critical questions and remarks of Prof. Weitenberg, this subsection about Exod. 3.14 Arm underwent a lot of improvements. Of course, the responsibility for the final version remains mine.

46. See Fred. C. Conybeare (ed.), *The Armenian Version of Revelation, Apocalypse of John* (TTSS, 5; Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1974 [repr., orig. 1907]), *ad. loc.*; Conybeare notes only at 1.8 that in one manuscript (3: Bibliothèque nationale, Paris—Anc. Fonds Arm. 9) 'an old, but not first, hand writes "who was"' (p. 4). The absence of the imperfect at the places concerned also applies to the editions of Zohrab and Murad, based on other manuscripts. See Joseph Molitor, 'Zum Textcharacter der armenischen Apokalypse', *Oriens christianus* 55 (1971), pp. 90-148; 56 (1972), pp. 1-48, esp. 91 (1.4), 92-93 (1.8), 110 (4.8), 138 (11.17), 10 (16.5). For a critical review of Armenian studies on the book of Revelation until a decade ago, including those of Conybeare and Molitor, see J. Neville Birdsall, 'Remarks on the Text of the Book of Revelation in Armenian', in N. Awde (ed.), *Armenian Perspectives* (cong.; Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1997), pp. 21-28. The imperfect is further not present in the influential translation of the book of Revelation by Nerses of Lambron (1152/53-1198), found in his adaptation of the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea (of 611); see Robert W. Thomson (ed. and trans.), *Nerses of Lambron: Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), esp. pp. 46, 49, 73, 112, 146 (according to Thomson, p. 24, the text of the translation printed in Zohrab is indebted to Nerses; that will even be more the case than Thomson indicates: in the note on p. 46, he wrongly suggests that contrary to Nerses, Zohrab has *or ēr* in 1.4 etc.). Professor Weitenberg called my attention to this book of Thomson.

47. Does the use of the present tense instead of an imperfect have a Syriac background? The Crawford manuscript writes the same form, *-itāw(hy)* (the tenseless particle *'it* + pronominal suffix *āwhy*), for both the participle and the imperfect in Greek. The translation found in it is considered to be part of the Philoxenian version (early sixth century). See John Gwynn (ed.), *The Apocalypse of St. John in a Syriac Version Hitherto Unknown (from a Ms. in the Library of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres*) (Amsterdam: APA-Philo Press, 1981 [repr., orig. 1897]), *ad loc.* The translation of the phrases concerned by Thomas of Harkel (early seventh century) is similar. See Arthur Vööbus (ed.), *The Apocalypse in the Harklean Version: A Facsimile Edition of Ms. Mardin Orth. 35, fol. 143r-159v* (CSCO 400, Subs 56; Leuven: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1978), *ad loc.* It should, however, be noted that the book of Revelation was not part of the

may actually be a passage in the Armenian translation of a commentary of Eusebius of Emesa (c. 300–360). His commentary on the Octateuch is known to have exercised considerable influence on Armenian translators in its defence of translating according to the sense rather than to the letter.[48] The passage about Exod. 3.14 reads as follows:

> 'I am', it [the Bible] says, 'who (I) was' (*or ēi-n*). But the Syrian writes instead of this 'who (I) was' (*or ēi-n*) the unspeakable tetragram by means of the same sign *Z-ah yah-n* and *z-šarah yah-n*, which the Jews say Adonayi, Lord.[49]

The last sentence of the quotation is not very transparent. With some effort the phrases *Z-ah yah-n* and *z-šarah yah-n* can be recognized as rendering the Peshitta's transliteration of the Hebrew text of Exod. 3.14a: *'ahyah 'ašar 'ahyah*. It is striking, however, that the sentence is divided in two parts. Presumably, Eusebius does so in order to state that the tetragram and the two parts are a matter of the same word—that seems he means when he speaks about 'the same sign'. The most striking thing remains, however, the rendering with the imperfect, '(I) was.'

This particular text has not been preserved in the original Greek.[50] Even if the Greek source text had a first person in the relative clause (therefore with the meaning 'who *I* was'), it should be noted that *or ei-n* as it stands may be understood by Armenian readers as 'who was' because of the congruence rule (such a reading might seem less probable for the second, independent occurrence of the phrase in the text, but it should be observed that a demonstrative pronoun explicitly connects the phrase there with the first occurrence and therefore makes it a quotation). If the relative clause of the original Greek text had been in the third person, then the source might be

Peshitta and had only a marginal existence in the Syriac-speaking regions. See Gwynn, *Apocalypse of St. John,* pp. ciii-civ; and Vööbus, *Apocalypse in the Harklean Version,* pp. 11-22.

48. A translation of this passage can be found in Gaguik Sarkissian, 'Les phases préliminaires de la langue littéraire arménienne vue par un historicien', in C. Burchard (ed.), *Armenia and the Bible* (cong.; UPATS, 12; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 195-206, esp. 202-203.

49. Prof. Weitenberg brought this text to my attention and further helped me by giving a translation of it. The text is found in Eusèbe d'Emèse, *Commentaire de l'Octateuque* (Armenian; ed. V. Hovhannessian) (Venice: Sub Lazar, 1980), p. 104. He also remarked that the *z-* used in it is probably an Armenian *nota accusativi*.

50. In correspondence Dr Françoise Petit confirmed this conclusion. For what is known of Eusebius about Exod. 3.14 in Greek, see Petit, *La chaîne sur l'Exode: II 'Collectio Coisliniana'et III Fonds caténique ancien* (TEG, 10; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), nos. 104 and 105, pp. 107-108. Dr Petit wrote very rightly to me that what has been preserved from Eusebius about Exod. 3.14 in Armenian does not correspond with that in Greek, and reciprocally.

sought in the bi- and tripartite temporal formulas. The background of the text, which makes a close connection between 'who was' and the divine name, may then be a distorted reception of a tradition such as that found in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. This Targum renders the divine designation of Exod. 3.14b according to the bipartite temporal formula ('I [am] him who was and who shall be'), but the introduction to this formula ties it closely to creation (therefore to the 'was' element).[51] Eusebius of Emesa lived in Caesarea and Antioch and made use of a Jewish informant.[52] In addition to this Targumic background, or just detached from it, a causal factor may also be that *'ahyah* would sound like a 'perfect' form in Syrian ears because of the lack of a preformative and the presence of an *a* in the last syllable.[53]

Very peculiarly, in two manuscripts (J5: Venice No. 10; and again K2), the letter *-n* has been added twice to the finite verb form *ē* in v. 14a; they read therefore *ē-nn*. Moreover, this doubling of the *-n* is also found in two other manuscripts in Exod. 3.14b (H3: Erevan No. 346; and H6: Erevan No. 141). The literature about the Armenian article does not give other examples of this phenomenon,[54] not to speak of any discussion about it.[55] Since this repetition of the article *-n* is found in different manuscripts, it cannot simply be a spelling error but must have some meaning (the different occurrences may have a common origin, but even then it has been adopted a few times and not been corrected).[56] The double *-n* is also found

51. Cf. Chapter 2, n. 229; also Chapter 4, secs. 3a (second paragraph) and 6 (point 3c).

52. R.B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis* (diss.; TEG, 6; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), pp. 8-9; and 50, 57, 63, 96, respectively.

53. Takamitsu Muraoka, *Classical Syriac: A Basic Grammar with a Chrestomathy* (PLO, n.s. 19; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2nd edn, 2005), sec. 55. The transition from the verbal system of one language to that of another and the grammatical terminologies connected with them may be rather confusing; the Armenian imperfect corresponds here to the Syriac perfect.

54. In correspondence about the peculiarity of the two *n*'s in the initial stages of my investigation of Exod. 3.14 Arm, Prof. Dr Boghos Levon Zekiyan, professor of Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, made clear to me that both *n*'s should be understood as article and put me on the right track.

55. For specific literature on the article, see P. Jungmann, 'L'emploi de l'article défini avec le substantif en arménien classique' (orig. diss.), *Revue des Études Arméniennes* n.s. 1 (1964), pp. 47-99; 2 (1965), pp. 43-116; Minassian, 'L'article du premier terme non substantivé d'une subordonnée', pp. 97-158; Lamberterie, 'L'article dans la relative', pp. 311-26; Jared S. Klein, *On Personal Deixis in Classical Armenian: A Study of the Syntax and Semantics of the* n-, s- *and* d- *Demonstratives in Manuscripts E and M of the Old Armenian Gospels* (MSB, n.s. 17; Dettelbach: Röll, 1996), pp. 8-23.

56. Prof. Weitenberg communicated to me that K2 and H3 show points of contact with J5.

in other texts: in the Zohrab edition of Revelation (at 16.5) and in the *History of the Albanians* attributed to Moses of Kalankatuk (2.7).[57] If we want to explain the double *-nn* in Exod. 3.14, ordinary grammar should be the point of departure, but in this case this does not suffice.[58] The article *-n* in relative clauses mostly occurs in those with a restrictive function. If we understand the relative clause in this way, there is presumably only one possibility to explain the other *–n*: the use of *ēē* as a noun. Such a nominalization is already found in *De Deo* of Eznik.[59] The divine answer would then read: 'I am the god who [is] the being.' We shall see that the other understandings of the relative clause dealt with subsequently here have also to be combined with this conception of *ēē* to explain the double *–n*. As for the relative clause, an *-n* is also found in an appositive clause after a proper name.[60] Therefore, if *astuac* is considered a proper name, the occurrence of an *–n* in the relative clause is not surprising. The statement of 14a can then be rendered as 'I am God, who [is] the being.' In sense it is closely related to the third possibility of understanding the relative clause: the *–n* also occurs in independent relative clauses.[61] In that case the divine statement has to be interpreted as 'I am god/God, the [one] who [is] the being.' It should be noted that the subject clause of Exod. 3.14b is obviously an independent relative clause and therefore this understanding can also explain the occurrence of the double *-n* there. A crucial element in all the explanations given of the double *-n* is the nominalization of *ēē*. Is this (only) the echo of philosophical thinking? It may also be seen as another way of correcting the Armenian text to the Greek text as it was understood, but in this case the attempt remains rather discrete; the cause

57. Found at the Titus Internet site. For Zohrab the occurrence in the printed edition was checked. Different from other instances in Revelation, the phrase in 16.5 is not preceded by a noun. See also Movsēs Dasxurançi, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians* (trans. C.J.F. Dowsett; LOS, 8; London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 73. Note that Dowsett translates *or ēē-nn* with 'I AM'.

58. The use of *–nn* in Exod. 3.14 might be thought to have been influenced by its use in the book of Revelation, but because of the rather marginal status of this book in the first millennium, this is not probable. On this marginal status, see, e.g., Thomson, *Nerses of Lambron*, pp. 6-10. Moreover, this only shifts the problem: the question becomes then how the double *-n* in Revelation has to be explained.

59. See Louis Mariès, 'Étude sur quelques noms et verbes d'existence chez Eznik', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 8 (1928), pp. 80-210, esp. 129 and 121 (referring to Eznik 12.13 at sec. 3); cf. 118. This use seems to persist to modern times; see Dirair Froundjian, *Armenisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1987 [repr., 1st edn, 1952]), s.v. *ēē*: 'der Allgegenwärtige, Gott'.

60. Klein, *On Personal Deixis*, pp. 18-19.

61. It may be noted, as Prof. Weitenberg reported me, that the nominalization of a syntactic unit is frequent in philosophical texts from the sixth to the eighth century, but this seems to have little bearing on the problem.

may be that the emendator wanted also to respect the already-established rendering of Exod. 3.14.

The considerations about the use of *p'oxarēn* and of the double *-n* in variants raise the question of *which understanding of the relative clause was most probable at the origin* of the Armenian translation of Exod. 3.14a: the restrictive or the appositive one. In the first case the noun and relative clause of the first answer give a description that identifies the speaker; subsequently, the restrictive qualification by the relative clause becomes an independent divine designation in the second answer (v. 14b). Seen in this way, the first divine answer does not give a direct reply to the question of Moses, as is most probably also true for the Greek translation (see Chapter 4, sec. 2a, last paragraph). In the second case the relative clause has an independent function: it clarifies more closely who is concerned or it may even be understood as a kind of second designation.[62] According to this last understanding, the question of Moses would immediately get a direct reply in the first answer (the answers of vv. 14b and 15a can then only be understood as a prolongation and extension of this answer).

Let us look at cases with a similar sentence structure. There are other examples of the sequence of *astuac* (in fact the plural of this word) and relative clause elsewhere in Exodus in which the relative clause is apparently restrictive because of the determination of the relative clause by the enclitic *–n* (32.1, 23: 'gods who shall go [*-n*] before us'; cf. with the singular in, e.g., Gen. 15.7; 16.13; 31.13).[63] These examples prove, however, little or nothing, because they are imposed by the source text. They indicate only that a sequence of *astuac* and a restrictive relative clause is not unusual. The fact that the verb form of the relative clause agrees with the preceding noun (*astuac*) and not with the subject of the main clause as usually in these cases (see above) seems more significant. This feature is rather exceptional: an investigation of the language of the Armenian Bible brought out only a few other examples.[64] The syntax is always different. In Paul's letter to the Romans we find: 'Who are you, a human being

62. In connection with his considerations about the double *n,* Prof. Zekiyan also suggested to me that *or ēn(n)* functions as the name of God.

63. According to Lamberterie, it concerns a feature that distinguishes a restrictive clause from an appositive clause even in general; see 'L'article dans la relative', p. 323.

64. This investigation was executed by means of the computer program BibleWorks: first Greek texts (in BibleWorks based on the Septuagint edition of Rahlfs, 1935; and the Greek NT text of Nestle-Aland, 27th edn, 1993) with relevant sentence constructions were selected, then their Armenian counterparts at the Titus Internet site (with the edition of Zohrab) examined. Some of the findings, such as that of Ezek. 16.45, must probably be viewed differently if considered against a Syriac background.

that replies (*mard or patasxani*—third-person singular, present) to God?' (Rom. 9.20; see also 14.4). Ezekiel 16.45 is rendered as 'Now you are the daughter of the mother (*môr-n*) who rejected (*or meržeac'*, third-person singular, aorist active) her husband and children.' The relative clause obviously relates here to the mother (the participial phrase in Greek may in principle also relate to the daughter but the translator apparently supposed that it concerns the mother). Isaiah 41.14 reads: 'I have helped you, says the God who is [there] to redeem you (*or p'rkeloc'n ē*).' The use of the third-person form (*ē*) indicates a difference in communication level: the last clause does not continue what is said by God but forms a qualification of the divine speaker by the prophet (see also Jn 1.42). In Revelation 1.8 we find: 'I am Ayb and I am Qē, said the Lord God, the [one] who is (*or ē-n*) and who is (*or ē*) [therefore twice a present tense, as dealt with earlier] and who is (*or ē*) to come, the Almighty.' The third-person forms of the tripartite phrase indicate presumably that it concerns a fixed phrase.[65] As for the sentence of Exod. 3.14a, the agreement of the verb form of the relative clause with the antecedent argues for the view that the relative clause is restrictive. Nevertheless, it is also possible to understand the clause as an apposition in the form of a free relative clause (cf. Rev. 1.8).

The latter way of reading of Exod. 3.14a is apparently facilitated by the fact that the word *astuac*, 'god', does not use an article in Armenian.[66] In this connection the reader may allow me a digression, one that consists of *a comparative note about the use of an article in connection with divine names*. As already described in the previous chapter, the difference in the Hebrew Bible between the personal name Yhwh and the titular name *(ha-)ᵉlōhîm* was maintained in the Greek translation by rendering these designations by the surrogate name *Kyrios* (without article) and the corresponding designation *ho theos*, respectively. Because Latin does not have an article, these two designations were translated by *Dominus* and *Deus* in this language. When subsequently the Bible was translated into Western European languages, the mediation through Latin was crucial: it resulted in the reverse of the Greek translation because the divine names were rendered as '*the* Lord' (therefore with article) and 'God' (without article), respectively![67]

65. However, in the translations of Rev. 4.8 and 11.17 given by Nerses and in the edition of Zohrab, a verb in the second person singular is found at the second member of the bipartite formula: *or es*, 'who are'. This might be inspired by the form of address that precedes ('Lord God Almighty').

66. Cf. Louis Mariès, 'Note sur l'emploi de *–n* avec *Astuac*', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 9 (1929), pp. 99-112.

67. Nevertheless, from a grammatical point of view, both designations can be considered names, as is done by John M. Anderson. He allows himself even the following remark: 'If we indulge in some grammatical anti-Arianism, *the Lord* and *the Saviour* belong to the same category as *God*.' See Anderson, *The Grammar of Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 193.

The Armenian version offers a particular variant with neither divine designation having an article: *Tēr* and *Astuac*, even though it could provide a noun with an article. This is possibly the result of a mediation through Syriac (with the words *mārā'* and *'alāhā*, respectively): in Syriac the difference between definite use and indefinite use was originally indicated by the vowels of a noun (therefore not indicated by the consonantal text) but subsequently this difference in noun status lost its function.[68] This explanation seems most probable to me, but it is also possible that the usage of the Armenian version was indigenous.[69]

The result of the lack of distinction in Armenian is noteworthy. In the oldest writing in Armenian apart from the Bible, *De Deo* (or *Against the Heresies*) of Eznik, the following sentence is attributed to Marcion as a quotation by him of 'the God of the Law': 'Adam, I am God, and there is no other; and apart from me there is no other god for you. So, if you hold as god someone other than me, know that you will die by death.'[70] In the first sentence, the God of the Old Testament introduces himself here, just as the appositive understanding of the relative clause suggests for Exod. 3.14a, simply as 'God'. The sentence has obviously been borrowed from Deutero-Isaiah (for MT see Isa. 45.22 [LXX similar]; 46.9; cf. 43.12/11). In the Hebrew Bible the first clause of 'I [am] god [*'ēl*] and there is no other' obviously has a contrastive function (other gods do not behave in the way you may expect of a god; cf. 45.21),[71] but within the context of Marcion's quotation this is rather doubtful.[72] Instead it seems to have the function of a self-introduction, something imaginable only within a strictly monotheistic conception, which is apparently shared by the author Eznik (he only tries to show the inconsistency of Marcion). Nevertheless, within the given context, the divine self-designation itself preserves a reminiscence of its generic status by its subsequent opposition to other possible gods.

In conclusion, it appears that from a reader's perspective the restrictive and appositive interpretations of the relative clause of the first divine answer are both good possibilities. This also agrees with the findings related to the

68. Muraoka, *Classical Syriac*, sec. 18.

69. This was strongly put forward by Prof. Zekiyan after reading the nearly final draft of this subsection: he pointed out that this kind of phraseology is very usual and normal in different stages of Armenian. For a general syntactical consideration of absence of the article in Armenian, see Jungmann, 'Emploi de l'article défini' (second part), pp. 100-103; cf. also 91-99.

70. Eznik of Kołb, *(A Treatise) On God* (CSCO: Eastern Christian Texts in Translation, 2; trans. M.J. Blanchard and R.D. Young; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), p. 182 (sec. 358); cf. 189 (sec. 370).

71. See Meindert Dijkstra, *Gods voorstelling: Predikatieve expressie van zelfopenbaring in oud-oosterse teksten en Deutero-Jesaja* (diss.; Kampen: Kok, 1980), pp. 246-47; 270-71. Cf. Chapter 4, sec. 3c, first part.

72. Louis Mariès translates: 'Adam, c'est moi qui suis Dieu!', but this does not seem justified by the Armenian text (*Adam, es em Astuac*). See Eznik de Kołb, *De Deo* (PO, 28,3/4; trans. and ed. L. Mariès and Ch. Mercier; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1959), pp. 662 and 515, respectively.

text variants. It should be added, however, that from a translational (writer's) point of view, things clearly argue for the idea that the relative clause is a restrictive one in relation to *astuac*. In the light of the Greek source text, the use of *astuac* is only an explication of the underlying antecedent, something promoted by the non-specific function of the relative pronoun in Armenian.

Within the latter context, we may pursue the matter further and ask whether there are not translation changes that may throw light on *the meaning the statement of Exod. 3.14* as the translator would have understood it. An investigation of this subject would require the study of patterns of translation changes and their motivation in the translation unit concerned (a text therefore with the same translator[s], probably Exodus or a larger part of the Pentateuch). Unfortunately, it is not possible for me to make such an inquiry. However, the results of other investigations already give some indication of an answer. The finding that distinct and sometimes pejorative designations of other gods and of matters related to their cult are used in the translation is noteworthy, especially because early Armenian writers referred to pagan and in particular Zoroastrian cult in the same terms.[73] In this context the translation of Exod. 3.14 sounds like the positive counterpart: the relative clause would imply then that this god is effectively present (vital sense) or truly exists (existential sense), which is not the case for the other gods, the 'idols'. Of course, this is only a tentative conclusion; further investigation is needed.

The Georgian Version. The Georgian translation (presumably from the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century) has come down to us in different versions. The Oshki manuscript reads in v. 14a: *me var romeli var*, in v. 14b: *romel ars*.[74] The statement of v. 14a can be rendered as 'I am [he] who is (lit. *am*).' As in the Vetus Latina, this way in which v. 14a is translated is apparently based on the congruence rule for predicative relative clauses. Because this syntactical rule is not found in current grammars

73. See S. Peter Cowe, 'Tendentious Translation and the Evangelical Imperative: Religious Polemic in the Early Armenian Church', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 22 (1990-91), pp. 97-114, esp. 101-105. His examples are from different books, the only example of Exodus being that of 2.16 (p. 103). His essay presupposes a large degree of congeniality among the Armenian translators, something that, of course, needs to be verified.

74. Unless otherwise indicated, the readings of the Georgian version mentioned here are extracted from Bakar Gigineišvili and Cot'ne K'ik'vidze (eds.), *Šesak'misay Gamoslvata* (C'ignni zvelisa aġtkumisani, I) (Tbilissi: Mec'nieraba, 1989), pp. 312-13. For some remarks about this edition, see Michel van Esbroeck, 'Les versions orientales de la Bible: Une orientation bibliographique', in J. Krašovec (ed.), *The Interpretation of the Bible* (cong.; JSOTSup, 289; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 399-509, esp. 475-76 and also 466.

of Old Georgian,[75] the translation of a number of biblical passages was checked with a view to this rule, notably by departing from cases in the Hebrew text with instances of congruence in the first person (of which the relative clause may be translated with a finite verb or with a participle in Greek). Some are translated by a participle, thereby agreeing or disagreeing with the Greek text, for example, Exod. 29.46 (AK recension); but in several cases the relative clause has indeed a finite verb in the first person such as in Gen. 15.7; Exod. 20.2 (both Oshki); 1 Chron. 21.17 (Mtskhetha ms., which usually translates with a participle elsewhere).

The AK recension renders Exod. 3.14 similarly to the Oshki manuscript; but in v. 14b we find the variation *romel igi* instead of simply *romel*. This reading is also attested in the *Old Georgian Lectionary*.[76] In another manuscript (A 179 / C) we read in v. 14a *me var mq'opi*, 'I am (the) being', resumed in v. 14b by *mq'opman*. The form *mq'opi* is an active participle (whereas *-man* indicates the ergative case of the subject).[77] The reading of the Mtskhetha manuscript in v. 14a is more complex: *me var ġmerta mq'opi romeli var*, 'I am (the) God (the) being who (that) is', resumed in v. 14b only as *romel igi ars*, 'the one who is'. Apparently the reading of this late manuscript (dating from seventeenth or eighteenth century) is a synthesis of several others. We find here a combination of the participle and the finite verb, but, interestingly, it also betrays the influence of the Armenian version by the addition of *ġmerta,* 'god'.

How the various translations relate to one another remains to be determined, and therefore also the question of what the original Georgian version of Exod. 3.14 was.[78] The Armenian element of the Mtskhetha text may

75. In particular the following grammars were consulted: Franz Zorell, *Grammatik zur altgeorgischen Bibelübersetzung* (SPIB; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1930); Akaki Schanidse, *Grammatik der altgeorgischen Sprache* (trans. H. Fähnrich; Tbilissi: Universitätsverlag Tbilissi, 1982); Heinz Fähnrich, *Grammatik der altgeorgischen Sprache* (Hamburg: Buske, 1994).

76. Found at the Titus Internet site.

77. According to Karl Horst Schmidt, the so-called active participle is really an agent noun (it indicates the performer of the verbal action and therefore does not refer to any particular time). See Schmidt, 'Zur Wiedergabe aktiver griechischer Partizipialkonstruktionen in den altarmenischen und altgeorgischen Bibelübersetzungen', in R. Schulz and M. Görg (eds.), *Lingua restituta orientalis* (Festschrift J. Assfalg; ÄAT 20; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1990), pp. 299-302. If true, then the form *mq'opi* must be an extension of this use.

78. For general information about this question see J. Neville Birdsall, 'Georgian Translations of the Bible', in Krašovec, *Interpretation of the Bible,* pp. 387-91; Bernard Outtier, 'L'Ancien Testament a-t-il été traduit en arménien et georgien du syriaque?', in F. Briquel Chatonnet and P. Le Moigne (eds.), *L'Ancien Testament en syriaque* (Festschrift A. Guillaumont; Paris: Geutner, 2008), pp. 215-20.

reflect the original translation or may be a later development. The Oshki and AK versions have originated from a direct confrontation with the Septuagint text, either during a process of revision of a translation on an Armenian (or possibly also Syriac?) basis or more independently.[79] In any case, it may be obvious that the relationship of the Georgian version to the Septuagint is more complicated than that of the Armenian version.

The Arabic Version. Arabic translations were made from at least the eighth century onward, and were based on different sources: they were dependent on Hebrew, Greek (Septuagint), Syriac (Peshitta or Syro-Hexapla), Coptic (notably Bohairic) and also on Latin (Vulgate) versions. The investigation of the different manuscripts of these translations has been going on for a long time, but overall it has unfortunately remained accidental and rudimentary. That is why the exact background of a particular translation is not always clear and may therefore be viewed differently.[80]

The manuscript *Arab 9* of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris is the best investigated specimen among the translations supposed to be based on the Septuagint.[81] This subsection will concentrate on this manuscript and its

79. Cf. the findings of Albert A.S. ten Kate, *Avec dévouement total: La lutte de Dieu contre toute puissance—Origine et evolution de toute-puissance* (diss.; University of Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 121-29, 267-92.

80. An example is the translation of al-Ḥāriṯ ibn Sinān ibn Sunbbāṭ, which is mostly considered to be made on the basis of the Syro-Hexapla. See Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (hereafter, GCAL), I.1 *Bibelübersetzungen* (Vatican City: Bibliotheca apostolica Vaticana, 1944), p. 107; Gérard Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, I.1. *Manuscrits chrétiens* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1972), pp. 18-19; Khalil Samir, s.v. 'Old Testament, Arabic Versions of the', in A.S. Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, VI (New York: MacMillan, 1991), pp. 1827-36, esp. 1834. However, Joseph Nasrallah considers the Septuagint to be its base. See Nasrallah, 'Deux versions Melchites partielles de la Bible du IX^{e} et du X^{e} siècles', *Oriens christianus* 64 (1980), pp. 202-15, esp. 206-208. His argument for it is the reference to the Septuagint by the copyist in notes at the end of each book of the Pentateuch in the oldest manuscript of this translation, *Sin. Arab 10*. However, this cannot settle the issue, among other things because the Syro-Hexapla was called the 'Greek one' or 'Seventy' in Syriac usage. See Sebastian P. Brock, s.v. 'Bibelübersetzungen, 4. Die Übersetzungen ins Syrische: 4.1 Altes Testament', in G. Krause and G. Müller (eds.), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, VI (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), pp. 181-89, esp. 182. This question can in the end only be addressed by an accurate collation of the translations in question. In this connection it also matters that in his introduction al-Ḥāriṯ indicates that he consulted several translations.

81. See Joseph Francis Rhode, *The Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch in the Church of Egypt* (diss.; Catholic University of America, 1921), pp. 70-74; John W. Wevers, 'The Textual Affinities of the Arabic Genesis of Bib. Nat. Arab 9', in Wevers and R.B. Redford (eds.), *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World* (Festschrift F.V. Winnett; TSTS, 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 46-74. See also Troupeau, *Catalogue*,

background because of the difficulty of access to Arabic manuscripts and the uncertainty about their origin. The divine statement in Exod. 3.14a is rendered by *anā al-azalī allaḏī lam azal*, 'I [am] the Eternal [One] who does not cease [to be]'; the message in v. 14b reads *al-azalī arsalnī*, 'The Eternal [One] has sent me.'[82] The translation of v. 14a is very similar to that of Saadya Gaon, which would agree with the finding that other passages in *Arab 9* also show the influence of Saadya's version.[83] Because of this influence, first some attention will be paid to the translation of Saadya.

Saadya Gaon (or Sa'īd ibn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī) was a Egyptian Jew who in the tenth century translated the Pentateuch from Hebrew into Arabic in an unusually free way. As for Exod. 3.14a, in some manuscripts we do not find a translation but a transliteration: *ahyā(h) ašār ahyā(h)*.[84] This is in line with the Aramaic tradition of Targum Onqelos and the Peshitta, which understands the divine answer apparently as a name.[85] This rendering by transliteration is presumably a revision by a conservative scribe (a correction based on the Hebrew original). However, it could in principle also be a rendering by Saadya himself, then probably his earliest translation.[86] The translation usually found is more innovative. It reads: *al-azalī allaḏī lam yazul*, 'The Eternal [One], who does not cease [to be]'.[87] Its first part is formulated as a direct reply to the

p. 16. Strangely enough Graf and Samir (see previous note) do not mention the manuscript.

82. Very kindly, my former Islam teacher at the University of Amsterdam, Dr K. Wagtendonk, helped me with the reading of the manuscript.

83. Wevers, 'Textual Affinities', p. 74.

84. Paul de Lagarde, *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, I. *Der Pentateuch arabisch* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1867), p. 62 (based on the Leiden manuscript arab 377, originally of Warner). This is resumed also here by *al-azalī* in 14b.

85. Bar Ali and Bar Bahlul's lexica seem to suggest a similar vocalization in the Peshitta (cf. sec. 1.1). However, many manuscripts have an *i* between *h* and *y* (*'ahiyah*) and mix the last two terms (e.g. *'ašarahyah*; cf. the previous, Armenian part). See Bar Ali, *Syrisch-arabische Glossen,* I (ed. G. Hoffmann; Kiel: Schwers, 1874), p. 14; Bar Bahlul, *Lexicon syriacum* (ed. R. Duval; Paris: Leroux, 1901), col. 45; R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus syriacus,* I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), col. 46; also Yitzhak Avishur, '*'hyh 'šr 'hyh* in Arabic, Syriac and Judaeo-Arabic' (in Hebrew), *Lěšonénu* 55 (1990), pp. 13-16, esp. 13-15. The shift from *ē* to *a* is normal before a guttural. See Muraoka, *Classical Syriac,* sec. 6B. On the *i* as 'helping vowel', see Arnold, 'Divine Name', p. 116 note. He also observes that 'the traditional vocalization both east and west is a constant *a*.'

86. The two possibilities mentioned are in general suggested for variants in Saadya's translation by Moses Zucker, *Rav Saadya Gaon's Translation of the Torah: Exegesis, Halakha, and Polemics in R. Saadya's Translation of the Pentateuch* (Hebrew with English summary) (New York: Feldheim, 1959), English summary, seventh page. According to Zucker, the Lagarde text (see n. 84) 'is a paraphrase of Sa'adya's translation, which nevertheless preserves many valuable readings' (eighth, last page of the summary).

87. Brian Walton, *Biblia sacra polyglotta*, I (orig. 1653) (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, repr., 1963), p. 237; VI (orig. 1657), p. 25, with an adden-

question of v. 13 about the one who has sent Moses (in this directness it continues the Aramaic tradition). But the content of this part is even more striking, the designation of God as 'eternal'. This may be inspired by v. 15, in which God declares that 'this [is] my name forever / for eternity' (*ilā al-dahr*, therefore rendered by means of a word other than *azalī*; the word *dahr* means 'course of time', 'a long stretch of time'; note also the rendering of the following parallel clause: 'this [is] my remembrance for a generation and generations [*'ilā jīl wa-ajyāl*]'). Because the divine statement in v. 14a does not show the clear influence of the Septuagint rendering, it should be explained in another way.[88] If we relate Saadya's rendering to the idem per idem understanding of the Hebrew original,[89] it would obviously be a very free paraphrase. Saadya could have taken the reference of God to himself in the divine statement as pointing to his constancy in time. However, the structure of the translation seems to reflect another interpretation of the syntax of the divine statement, an understanding of it as a name followed by its explanation.[90] Confirmation of this interpretation is found in the fact that *al-azalī*, 'the Eternal [One]', also functions as a divine name elsewhere in Saadya's translation. In this respect Saadya is a precursor of the famous German translation of Moses Mendelssohn in the eighteenth century, which has had such a big impact on Jewish usage.

Saadya uses the designation *al-azalī* almost systematically as the rendering of the short divine name Yah. It is found in Exod. 15.2; 17.16; and in Isa. 12.2; 26.4; 38.11.[91] In the Psalms Yah is sometimes not translated (115.17—but see v. 18; 118.18-19—but see v. 17); once it is rendered by *al-ṭā'iq*, 'the Almighty' (94.12), but in the other texts by *al-azalī*.[92] Moreover, this rendering is also employed to

dum of Edward Pococke that marks the variants in relation to the earlier polyglots and the Constantinople edition of 1546 ('De ratione variantium in Pent. Arab. Lectionum'), see p. 25 of that section; R. Saadia ben Iosef al-Fayyoûmî, *Oeuvres complètes* (ed. J. Derenbourg), I. 'Version arabe du Pentateuque' (Paris: Leroux, 1893), p. 84. For the background of the Arabic version in the Paris and London polyglots, see John Alexander Thompson, *The Major Arabic Bibles: Their Origin and Nature* (New York: American Bible Society, 1956), esp. pp. 7-15

88. According to Tharwat Kades, Saadya made use of the Septuagint for his version. See Kades, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen im 19. Jahrhundert* (diss.; SIGC, 104; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1997), p. 19. However, he does not give any substantiation of this claim, nor could evidence for it be found in other literature.

89. The idem per idem construction (see Chapter 2, sec. 6c) is well known in Arabic. See H. Reckendorf, *Über Paronomasie in der semitischen Sprachen* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1909), pp. 162-66. Paul de Lagarde is probably the first scholar who pointed to the Arabic parallels to Exod. 3.14a. See Lagarde, *Psalterium iuxta hebraeos Hieronymi* (Leipzig: Treubner, 1874), pp. 156-58.

90. See Chapter 2, sec. 6a. Also Ibn Ezra (*ad loc.*) and Judah Halevi (*Kuzari*, IV,3) before him interpreted the construction in this sense (see Chapter 2, n. 157).

91. Saadya's translations of Exodus and Isaiah were studied by means of Saadia ben Iosef al-Fayyoûmî, *Oeuvres complètes* (ed. J. Derenbourg), I (1893) and III (1896), respectively (see n. 87).

92. The investigation of the Psalms was based on the German dissertation series *Saadia Al-fajjûmi's Psalmenübersetzung und Commentar* (S.H. Margulies, [*Psalms 1-20*],

translate the qualification of God as *mē'ôlām*, 'from of old' / 'from eternity' (93.2); and, together with the designation *al-qadīm*, 'the Ancient [One]', also the description *yošēb qedem*, 'sitting [on the throne] from of old' (55.20).

An examination of Exodus shows that Saadya mostly renders Yhwh with *allāh* (e.g. in 3.7, 15, 16, 18).[93] Sometimes he translates it with *rabb* (with or without a pronominal suffix), especially if the divine name is used as vocative (e.g. 15.6) or when combined with *'elōhîm* and a pronominal suffix (*rabb* then being accompanied or not by *allāh*; see, e.g., 20.2 and 5.17, respectively). It should be noted that *allāh* also serves as the common translation of the divine designation *'elōhîm* (see, e.g., 2.23-25; 3.4, 12). The title *'adonāy* is translated by *rabb* (e.g. 4.10, 13) or *al-sajid* (before *allāh*, see, e.g., 34.23).

According to his renderings Saadya apparently connected the divine names Ehyeh and Yah on the one hand but distinguished carefully between the divine names Yah and Yhwh on the other. The reasons for this are not clear. Did he see Ehyeh and Yah as more intimate divine names and Yhwh as a more public one, such as Rashbam would later do explicitly for Ehyeh and Yhwh at Exod. 3.14-15?

Unlike Saadya, Mendelssohn employed 'the Eternal One' (*der Ewige*) systematically as the rendering of the divine name Yhwh.[94] Such a translation of the divine name was introduced previously by Olivetan and subsequently used in the different editions of the Genevan French Bible (see sec. 4b).[95] Much earlier this was probably also the case in Baruch 3 and 4.[96]

Within the framework of Saadya's translation of the divine statement, the relative clause 'who does not cease [to be]' explains what is meant by 'the Eternal One': it points to the continuance of God's being.[97] A preserved portion of Saadya's Pentateuch commentary confirms this interpretation: he spells out and elucidates

1884; S. Lehmann, *Psalm 21-41*, 1901; S. Baron, *Psalm 50-72*, 1900; S. Galliner, *Psalm 73-89*, 1903; E. Eisen, *Psalm 90-106*, 1934; J.Z. Lauterbach, *Psalm 107-124*, 1903). As is obvious from these data, the series does unfortunately not cover all the Psalms

93. For the literature used for finding the instances mentioned in this paragraph, see n. 91.

94. For an evaluation of the significance of this rendering, see Franz Rosenzweig, '"Der Ewige: Moses Mendelssohn und der Gottesname"' (orig. 1929), in Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), pp. 182-98.

95. Rosenzweig, 'Der Ewige', p. 184 (cf. also 191), suggests that Mendelssohn was influenced in this rendering by the strong (French-speaking) Huguenot community in Berlin.

96. For the last issue, see David G. Burke, *The Poetry of Baruch: A Reconstruction and Analysis of the Original Hebrew Text of Baruch 3:9–5:9* (SBLSCS, 17; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), pp. 164-65.

97. It may be asked whether in this respect Saadya has not been influenced by 'early Muslim theologians [who] always circumscribed the eternal existence of God's attributes, etc., with the verbal expression *lam yazal* . . . *wa-lā yazālo*'. For this quotation, see J[osef] van Ess, s.v. *Azal*, in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, III (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989), p. 179 (with references). Van Ess also notes that Arab lexicographers frequently connect *azal*, 'eternity', etymologically with *lam yazal* but that this is certainly wrong.

the subordinate clause as 'who did not pass (*'br*) and will not pass (away), for he is the first and the last.'[98,99] It may be added that in the context of Saadya's philosophical work his comment would get a new dimension. For in *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* he indicates that God is not determined by time and is in fact far removed from such a concept.[100] In this connection he refers to texts such as Ps. 90.2 ('From eternity to eternity you [are] god') and explains this as meaning that God has helped his servants from the beginning of time. He interprets therefore time as a matter of people's perception.

Saadya's translation influenced many other translations. At Exod. 3.14 its impact is manifest in other (a) Jewish, (b) Samaritan and (c) Christian translations.[101] As indicated above, the last group includes *Arab 9*.

98. Quoted in Hebrew by Nachmanides; cf. the translation in Ramban (Nachmanides), *Commentary on the Torah: Exodus* (trans. C.B. Chavel) (New York: Shilo, 1973), p. 37 ('Whose existence has never ceased and will never cease . . .'). The first part of the quotation is translated by Alexander Altmann as 'Who did not cease to be and shall not cease to be', a translation that is even more reminiscent of the Arabic rendering of Exod. 3.14a. See Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 408. It may be added that Saadya's Pentateuch commentary has been preserved only fragmentarily. According to Moses Zucker, it covered originally the first half of Genesis as well as the books of Exodus and Leviticus. See Zucker, *Gaon's Translation of the Torah* (English summary, first page). The words are also quoted in Mendelssohn's commentary, but the nature of this quotation does not suggest a reliance on Saadya by Mendelssohn in the use of 'Eternal' as the rendering of the divine name. Moreover, the words are not quoted by Mendelssohn himself but added by the co-author Solomon Dubno. See Altmann, *Mendelssohn*, pp. 405-409, esp. 408-409.

99. It may be noted that this quotation forms the indirect connection between the translation of Saadya and the French one of Olivetan, because it is also quoted in an annotation in the Hebrew-Latin Bible of Seb. Münster, a reference work for Olivetan (see sec. 4b below).

100. See Saadya's remarks on the category of time in Saadya, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (trans. S. Rosenblatt; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 125 (note also the following statement on the same page: 'If, nevertheless, we do describe God as being enduring and permanent, that is done only by way of approximation').

101. (a) See the less free translation published by Thomas Erpenius (van Erpe), *Pentateuchus Mosis Arabicè* (Leiden: Maire, 1622). Cf. *GCAL* (see n. 80), I.1, p. 103 (does the reference to ms. Scaliger 215 concern the same Scaliger ms. that in the preface Erpenius refers to as the basis of his edition?). For Exod. 3.14 the difference concerns only the negation particle in 14a: *al-azalī allaḏī laysa yazul* (p. 120). For similar or different Judaeo-Arabic renderings, see further Avishur, '*'hyh 'šr 'hyh* in Arabic', 15-16. (b) See the critical Pentateuch edition of Haseeb Shehadeh, *Sifr al-takwīn wa-Sifr al-ḵurūǧ* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1989), pp. 268-69 (Exod. 3.14 a and b: identical with Saadya's rendering). See about this issue in general Edward Robertson, 'The Relationship of the Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch to That of Saadya', in E.I.J. Rosenthal (ed.), *Saadya Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1943), pp. 166-76. (c) See the ms. *Escorial* 1857: *al-qadīm al-azalī* ('the Eternal Ancient [One]'; for 'ancient' as divine designation cf. Dan. 7.13) in 14a, and

After this long excursus about Saadya's translation of Exod. 3.14 and the prehistory of the rendering of the divine name by 'the Eternal One', let us now look more closely at the rendering of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a in *Arab 9*.[102] This is not simply borrowed from Saadya, but is really a translation of the Greek text. This is clear from the addition of the personal pronoun *anā*, 'I'. It involves the change of the verb in the relative clause from a third-person to a first-person form, which is usual in Arabic.[103] (Note also the remarkable alliteration and oxymoron this change produces: *azalī—azal*.) In this context the translation with 'eternal' may be a rendering of the imperfective aspect of the Greek participle *ho ōn*. Because of the influence of Saadya, the rendering of the divine statement probably has a certain metaphysical flavour, but, of course, its readers may have interpreted it otherwise. For instance, a native reader may connect the divine statement of v. 14a closely with the last half verse of v. 15: 'this [is] my name of (the) eternity (*al-ḵuld*—infinite duration) and a remembrance for a

allāh al-azalī ('God, the Eternal [One]') in 14b. See Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, 'A Nestorian Arabic Pentateuch Used in Western Islamic Lands', in D. Thomas (ed.), *The Bible in Arab Christianity* (cong.; HCMR, 6; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), pp. 351-68, esp. 362. The author refers to fol. 144v but also mentions the free translation included in fol. 133v: *anā allaḏī lam yazal*. In personal correspondence, Prof. Dr Monferrer (attached to Cordoba University) informed me kindly that this rendering is found in a 'preliminary abstract' of the book of Exodus. It should be added here that *Escorial* 1857 is based on the translation of al-Ḥāriṯ (see n. 80). See Monferrer, 'Nestorian Arabic Pentateuch', p. 353; *GCAL,* I.1, p. 107 (Escurial III Beth 6 concerns the same ms.; see Nemesio Morata, 'Un catálogo de los fondos árabes primitivos de el Escorial', *Al-Andalus* 2 [1934], pp. 87-181, esp. 144 and 181). Prof. Monferrer also suggested to me that the form *yazul* in Saadya instead of *yazal* is a Middle Arabic interference of the Judaeo-Arabic register. On *yazal* as the ordinary preformative conjugation form in Classical Arabic of *zal* (root: z-w-l), see, e.g., W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language,* I (rev. by W. Robertson Smith and M.J. de Goeje; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977 [repr. of 3rd edn of 1896-98]), sec. 157; on the usual perfect meaning of an apocopated preformative verb form after *lam*, see Wright, *Grammar of the Arabic Language*, II, sec. 12. It may, however, be doubted that *yazul* has exclusively a perfect meaning in Saadya's translation of Exod. 3.14; at least his explanation of this verse (see earlier in the main text of the digression) argues against this.

102. The translation of *Arab 9* in Exod. 15.2 and 17.16 does not reflect the translation of Saadya with *al-azalī*, but agrees in this respect with the Septuagint translation of these verses.

103. In Arabic the congruence rule for predicative relative clauses is, however, not obligatory. On this rule, see H. Reckendorf, *Die syntaktischen Verhältnisse des Arabischen* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967 [repr., orig. 1895]), sec. 198; cf. 173. See also A.F.L. Beeston, 'Reflections on Verbs "to Be"', *JSS* 29 (1984), pp. 7-13, esp. 11. He illustrates this rule even by means of Exod. 3.14a. However, this is because he thinks, strangely enough, that the Hebrew text reads *ʾanî ʾašer ʾehye*, and therefore translates it as *ʾana llaḏī ʾakūnu*, 'I am the One-who-exists'!

generation of the generations.' In that case the rendering can be thought to refer to God's faithfulness.

The Church Slavonic Version. Concerning the Church Slavonic version, it may first of all be noted that the text of Exod. 3.14 was not part of the so-called Prophetologium, the lectionary texts of the Old Testament (like, e.g., Exod. 3.1-8). This implies that this verse does not belong to the oldest translated parts of Exodus. However, the investigation of biblical manuscripts of Exodus in the Church Slavonic translation has hardly begun, which is also the situation for many other Old Testament books.[104] That is why only the readings of Exod. 3.14 according to some late editions can be described here. The Gennadian Bible (named after its originator, Archbishop Gennadius of Novgorod) was the first compilation of the Bible in Church Slavonic (Novgorod, 1499), but it was not published. This version has been important, however, because it underlay later major Bible editions such as the Ostrog Bible (promoted by Prince Constantin of Ostrog, 1581) and the Elizabethan Bible (1st edn, 1751, Petersburg; 2nd edn, 1756, Moscow). The divine statement of Exod. 3.14a reads in the Gennadian Bible: *az" esm' syj*; this is resumed by *syj* in the message of v. 14b.[105, 106] Since the long form of a participle such as *syj* implies definiteness, the meaning of the translations of the two parts of the verse agrees with the Septuagint text: '(I am) *the* be-ing.'

By contrast, the rendering of the Ostrog Bible, the first complete Bible published in Church Slavonic, is rather peculiar. The divine statement in Exod. 3.14a reads there: *az" esm' eže esm'*, therefore a predicate with a relative pronoun followed by the first-person verb form *esm'*.[107] Nevertheless, the divine designation in the message to the Israelites in v. 14b is still *syj*. This transition from a finite verb to a participle is unique in comparison to

104. On the Church Slavonic translation, see esp. Francis J. Thomson, 'The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament', in Krašovec, *Interpretation of the Bible* (see n. 74 above), pp. 605-920; on Exod. 3.14a, see esp. 654 (note) and 733 note.

105. Prof. Dr G. Freidhof of the Slavic Seminar of Goethe-University at Frankfurt am Main reported this to me, and was even so kind as to lend me a microfilm with parts of the Pentateuch of the Gennadian Bible. I am very grateful for that because this was vital to my investigation of the Church Slavonic translation.

106. See the references to manuscripts from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century by B.A. Uspensky, 'On the Origin of the Glagolitic Alphabet' (in Russian), *Voprosy jazykosnanija* (Moscow), 2005, no. 1, pp. 63-67, n. 35. See also other theological-philosophical literature; it seems that the translation of *On the Divine Names* of the Pseudo-Areopagite also has the rendering *az" esm' syj*. See the reference by Natal'ja Nikolaeva, *Die altslavische Übersetzung des Traktats Die Gottesnamen von Dionysius Areopagita* (BzS, 42), Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2000, p. 108 (in fact, however, Nikolaeva refers only to the biblical text itself but apparently she does not see any difference).

107. For this edition, see *Ostrožskaja Biblija* (Moscow: Slovo-Art, 1988).

the other daughter versions of the Septuagint. What is also peculiar in this connection is the use of *eže* in v. 14a, which is the neuter form of the relative pronoun ('what'; also found at the beginning of a free relative in, e.g., 4.12,15). As relative pronoun we would expect, however, the masculine form *iže*, equal to 'who' (for *iže* introducing a free relative see, e.g., 9.21).

The background of the peculiar rendering of Exod. 3.14a can be sought in different directions.

- The form of the divine statement in v. 14a in the Ostrog Bible could be the result of a(n existing) translation of v. 14a from Hebrew into Church Slavonic.[108] In support of this view it can be noted that other passages of the Pentateuch of the Ostrog Bible may be influenced by the Masoretic Hebrew text. For instance, the Prophetologium and the Gennadian Bible read in Exod. 3.4 *čto est'?*, 'What is [it]?', agreeing in this respect with the Septuagint text (a). However, the Ostrog Bible has here *se az", gospodi*, therefore 'Here [am] I' combined with 'Lord' (this last addition has already been introduced earlier in Slavonic manuscripts on the basis of a Greek variant) (b).[109] What matters here is that 'here [am] I' is clearly in agreement with *hinnēnî* in the Hebrew text. However, in this case one could also refer to the similar *adsum* in the Vulgate. Probably, the rendering of v. 4 is the result of collation of several texts. As for Exod. 3.14a, it is significant that a similar reading exists in about the same time: in the Slavic pseudepigraphic fragment 'The seventy names of God' (dated sixteenth to eighteenth century) one of the divine names mentioned is: *az esm' iže esm'*.[110] As is well known, in a language such as English the Hebrew relative particle *'ăšer* can have as its counterpart both the relative pronouns 'who' (with an identifying function) and 'what' (with a predicational function). In the case of Exod. 3.14a the Ostrog reviser would have opted for the 'what'-sense. However, through the presence of a first-person pronoun, *az"*, the Ostrog text differs from the Hebrew one, in which a perfect symmetry of the main and subordinate clauses exists, with only the same verb form in both cases (*'ehye*). To form a grammati-

108. See Miguel Arranz, 'Une traduction du tétragramme divin dans quelques texts liturgiques slaves', *Jews and Slavs* 1 (1993), pp. 11-19, esp. 14 (referring to a verbal communication of C. Rabin).

109. (a) See Thomson, 'Slavonic Translation', pp. 654 and 652-53 (dealing with 3.4 and other verses with reference to a Slavonic translation revised on the basis of the Masoretic text). For *čto est'* in the Prophetologium, see Zdenka Ribarova and Zoe Hauptova (eds.), *Grigorovičev parimejnik* (Skopje: Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1998), p. 103. The Gennadian Bible has the abbreviated form *e* instead of *est'*. (b) See Thomson, 'Slavonic Translation', p. 653.

110. Uspensky, 'Glagolitic Alphabet', n. 29.

cal sentence, the independent personal pronoun, is, nevertheless, as unnecessary in Slavonic as in Hebrew. What is more, it was unusual to interpret the relative particle of the divine statement as 'what'. Such an innovative new interpretation of Exod. 3.14a would therefore not match with the conservative approach of the Ostrog project, which intended only to select the best existing reading.

- The rendering may have been influenced by the Vulgate, one of the most important sources consulted in the preparation of the Ostrog Bible.[111] The composition of the sentence in the Vulgate is comparable: *ego sum qui sum* (see further the next section). The Ostrog Bible uses, however, the neuter pronoun *eže* instead of *qui*. To my knowledge there does not exist a manuscript of the Vulgate with a corresponding *quod*.[112] In the case that the Vulgate indeed served as model, the difference between *qui* and *eže* would have been disregarded in one way or another.[113,114]

111. Cf. Thomson, 'Slavonic Translation', pp. 679: 'the revisers constantly referred to the Vulgate'.

112. A variant with *quod* as relative pronoun is not mentioned in H. Quentin (ed.), *Biblica Sacra iuxta latinam Vulgatam versionem*, II *Libros Exodi et Levitici* (Rome: Typis polyglottis Vaticanus, 1929); nor in R. Weber, B. Fischer and R. Gryson (eds.), *Biblica Sacra Vulgata* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 4th edn, 1994). In another context, Emma Marshall Denkinger suggests that the Vulgate text of the *Biblia Magna* published at Lyons in 1525 reads *q[uo]d*. See Denkinger, 'The *Impresa* Portrait of Sir Philip Sidney in the National Portrait Gallery', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 47 (1932), pp. 17-45, esp. 18 note. This is, however, incorrect. It actually reads 'q': *Ego sum q sum*. The abbreviation *q* stands here for *qui* (see also 4.20 and 7.5) (Denkinger also does not realize that the legend *Gratia Dei svm id qvot* [*sic*] *svm* was actually extracted from 1 Cor. 15.10 and therefore not inspired by Exod. 3.14.) This line of investigation was inspired by a suggestion of Prof. Dr. F. J. Thomson, of the University of Antwerp, with whom I corresponded about Exod. 3.14 in the Church Slavonic translation.

113. Abbreviations such as employed in *Biblia Magna* (see previous note)—which were already used in the Gutenberg Bible and, still earlier, in mediaeval manuscripts—may have led relatively easily to misinterpretations, not least because the way of abbreviating is rather irregular and opaque (a survey of Exod. 1.1–7.13 indicates that the majority of *qui* instances is not abbreviated; on the other hand, *quod* is usually not found fully written: it is sometimes abridged as *qd*, see, e.g., 3.13 but is more often represented by a kind of fusion of q + p, see, e.g., 3.2, 4, 12, and 19; it may also be noted that the abbreviation *qd* has a counterpart in the rather similar abbreviation *qd* for *quid* in 3.13)! The question is therefore whether they were also present in the Vulgate editions consulted by the Ostrog revisers.

114. Cf. Francis Skorina: *az" esm" eiž" esm"* (note the peculiar form *eiž'* here), continued in v. 14b by *eiže est"*. See S.V. Kuz'min (ed.), *Bibliya. Faksimil'nae ŭznaŭlenne Biblii, vydadzenay Francyskam Skarynayu ŭ 1517-1519 gadakh*, I (Minsk: Belaruskaya éncyklapedyya, 1990), p. 208. The language of Skorina's translation can be characterized as Church Slavonic mixed with numerous Byelorussian / Ruthenian elements. This

- The rendering may also have been occasioned by developments in the East-Slavic vernacular. In this respect it may be relevant that a long form such as *syj* was no longer experienced as definite in later Church Slavonic.[115] A relative clause can then be used as a substitute for it.[116] However, to my knowledge there are no other comparable changes found in the Ostrog Bible.[117] What is more relevant in this connection is the use of the neuter form *eže*. It is noteworthy that the gender forms of the relative pronoun *iže – jaže –(j)eže* are sometimes confused (cf. for Exodus: 4.18; 10.15; 11.5; 12.39—also not parts of the Prophetologium). This and related findings are seen as signs that on its way to a complete disappearance this pronoun had become indeclinable to a certain extent in the (written) vernacular.[118] In any case, because of the loss of distinction between the two forms of the relative pronoun, the rendering *az" esm' eže esm'* does not differ from that of *az" esm' iže esm'* as significantly as it might seem at first sight.
- It is also relevant that the translation of 1 Cor. 15.10 includes a phrasing identical to the Ostrog rendering of Exod. 3.14a: 'by the grace of God

after, e.g., John Sadoŭski, 'Belorussian Culture in the Sixteenth Century', *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 12 (1970), pp. 469-82, esp. 475. Also Skorina's translation is known to have been influenced by the Vulgate. See Thomson, 'Slavonic Translation', p. 668.

115. Cf. A.P. Vlasto, *A Linguistic History of Russia to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), secs. 119-22; Emilia Crome, in Crome, R. Eckert and C. Fleckenstein, *Geschichte der russischen Sprache* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1983), sec. 252. The line of investigation in this paragraph was suggested by Prof. Freidhof (personal communication).

116. This seems at the base of the use of the relative pronoun as a kind of translation of the Greek article. Ample evidence of this phenomenon is found in Radoslav Večerka, *Altkirchenslavische (altbulgarische) Syntax*, III *Die Satztypen: Der einfache Satz* (MLS, 36/27,3; Freiburg i.Br.: Weiher, 1996), § 69. Since it is followed by a non-nominal verb form, it seems improbable that *eže* in Exod. 3.14a should be interpreted in this sense.

117. Since long participles followed by a complement (even in Isa. 52.6) are somewhat specified, instances without complement deserve in particular attention. They are without change: 'Are you *yrjadyj* (the coming one)?' (Mt. 11.3; Lk. 7.19, 20); cf. 'I am … *syj* (the be-ing), who was and *yrjadyj* (the coming one)' (Rev. 1.8; similarly 16.5). Cf. also Job 19.6; 32.7, 8 (third-person cases; not checked, also because the Gennadian text was not available).

118. See André Vaillant, *Manuel du vieux slave* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1948), sec. 96; Nikolaos H. Trunte, *Sloven'skyi jēzek: Ein praktisches Lehrbuch des Kirchenslavischen in 30 Lektionen*, I *Altkirchenslavisch* (Munich: Sagner, 5th edn, 2003), sec. 11.7; see also Večerka, *Altkirchenslavische (altbulgarische) Syntax*, IV *Die Satztypen: Der zusammengesetzte Satz* (MLS, 46/27,4; Freiburg i.Br.: Weiher, 2002), §§ 60.1 + 63.2; Gerd Freidhof, *Vergleichende sprachliche Studien zur Gennadius-Bibel (1499) und Ostroger Bibel (1580/81): Die Bücher Paralipomenon, Esra, Tobias, Judith, Sapientia und Makkabäer* (Frankfurter Abh. z. Slav., 21; Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 100, 139-40.

> *(j)esm' (j)eže (j)esm'*, 'I am what I am.' This phrasing may therefore have interfered with Exod. 3.14a, all the more since this verse was part of the lectionary reading and can therefore be supposed to have been well known.[119]

To conclude, the use of *eže* in in the Ostrog rendering of Exod. 3.14a is most probably occasioned by developments in the vernacular and presumably also by interference from 1 Cor. 15.10. The composition of the rendering of v. 14a as a whole (the use of a personal pronoun at the beginning and that of a relative clause) seems to reflect in particular the rendering of the Vulgate. It may also betray some (indirect) knowledge of the Hebrew original. The transition from a finite verb to a participle in v. 14b indicates an inclusive approach that seems to be characteristic of the Ostrog project as a whole. Its Bible edition combined books of different canon lists such as 3 Esdras (= 4 Esdras according to the Vulgate) and 3 Maccabees (from the LXX) among its biblical books (a). The rendering of Exod. 3.14, a verse of central importance for theology, seems therefore a reflection of the ecumenical spirit of the project (b).[120]

The next question is how the rendering of the statement of Exod. 3.14a should be interpreted. This can not be derived right away from its background (apart from the use of *eže*). One possibility is to interpret the rendering of v. 3.14a as an idem per idem sentence: '(As for me) I am what (who) I am.' There is clearly a receptiveness for this (posterior) kind of idem per idem construction by Slavonic translators: the instances elsewhere in the Greek Bible are mostly translated faithfully (see Exod. 33.19 and Rom. 9.15; 2 Kgdms 15.20; 1 Cor. 15.10; cf. 1 Kgdms 23.13 with a paraphrase: 'they went where they wished'; also 4 Kgdms 8.1). The large similarity with the sentence of 1 Cor. 15.10 also argues strongly for an idem per idem interpretation.

The alternative would be to interpret the form of the second verb as a matter of congruence and therefore the statement as a kind of characterization: 'I am what (who) is.' There are some indications that the congruence rule for predicative relative clauses was also operative in Church Slavonic. The biblical example closest to the rendering of Exod. 3.14a is found in 1 Chron. 21.17: *az" esm' iže s" grěšich"*, literally 'I am [the one] who *have* sinned (the last word being a first-person singular aorist).[121] It should be

119. Prof. Thomson confirmed this supposition. 1 Cor. 15.1–11 was the epistle reading for the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost. See Johannes G. van der Tak, *The Old Slavic Apostolos: The Lessons of the Short Lectionary from Pentecost to Great Lent and the Abstracts of the Epistles* (diss.; University of Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 44-45.

120. For (a) see Thomson, 'Slavonic Translation', p. 684; for (b) cf. p. 674.

121. Cf. also 1 Cor. 15.9. In other cases of pedicative relative clause congruence in Hebrew, participial clauses are usually found in Church Slavonic as in the majority of

noted, however, that this sentence has been translated from Latin (*ego qui peccavi*; some biblical books missing in Church Slavonic such as Chronicles were translated for the Gennadian Bible from the Vulgate).[122] What matters more in connection with Exod. 3.14a, is that it is not probable that the mere presence of the personal pronoun *az"* can impose an understanding of the second *esm'* as a congruent form and therefore as an independent verb. The transition from the relative clause of v. 14a to the participle in v. 14b could seem to favour the interpretation of the relative clause of v. 14a as a characterization. However, as we shall see (see sec. 4 below), in this early modern age also idem per idem renderings of Exod. 3.14a are often interpreted as pointing to being (notably constancy of being) and in such a context the transition to the participle does not cause a big problem.

2. *The Translation of the Vulgate*

The divine statement of Exod. 3.14a reads in the Vulgate: *ego sum qui sum*. The *background of this rendering* is often sought in the text of the Hebrew Bible; it is considered to be consistent with this text.[123] As a translation directly from Hebrew, it seems obvious to render the translation with 'I am who I am.' Bible translations based on the Vulgate have often done so (see sec. 3). Though the presence of *ego* could be seen as a sign of asymmetry between both clauses, its presence is not an entirely insuperable obstacle to an idem per idem interpretation: in agreement with one of its usual functions in direct speech, the personal pronoun *ego* may serve only to focus on the subject in some respect.[124] By that, it also signals a change of viewpoint,

cases in Greek. The phenomenon is not mentioned in current Church Slavonic grammars.

122. See Freidhof, *Vergleichende sprachliche Studien*, pp. 14, 23; Thomson, 'Slavonic Translation', pp. 658, 677, 768.

123. See, e.g., Kedar-Kopfstein, *Vulgate as a Translation*, pp. 251-52 ('V imitates H'); R.P. Carroll, 'Strange Fire: Abstract of Presence Absent in the Text— Meditations on Exodus 3', *JSOT* 61 (1994), pp. 39-58, esp. 52-53; cf. Alviero Niccacci, 'Esodo 3,14a: "Io sarò quello che ero" e un parallelo egiziano', *LASBF* 35 (1985), pp. 7-26, esp. 7 (in relation to Vulg. he speaks of a 'paronomastic' construction, but denies this interpretation for the Hebrew source text).

124. Possibilities are (1a) identification, (1b) indication of contrast and (1c) focus on the perspective of the subject (experience, subjectivity, self-defence, certitude of the statement). In narrative texts it signals in particular (2) a change of topic. See H[erman] Pinkster, 'Ego, tu, nos: Opmerkingen over het gebruik van subjektpronomina, in het bijzonder in Cicero *De Oratore II*', *Lampas* 19 (1986), 309-22; also Pinkster, 'The Pragmatic Motivation for the Use of Subject Pronouns in Latin: The Case of Petronius', in P. Grimal *et al.*, *Études de linguistique générale et de linguistique latine* (Festschrift G. Serbat; Paris: Société pour l'Information Grammaticale, 1987), pp. 369-79 (possibility 1a is, however, lacking in the latter article).

from Moses and the Israelites (v. 13) to that of God. What is more striking is that the Vulgate translates the message of 3.14b with *qui est misit me ad vos*. How can the transition from *qui sum* to *qui est* be explained? It may be that the Vulgate follows here the Septuagint in adapting the grammatical person as it also does elsewhere (see, e.g., Exod. 23.25).[125] The reasons for the translation in v. 14b can then be similar to those in the Septuagint: avoiding the use of the first-person verbal form *sum* as subject as ungrammatical and unaesthetic,[126] and preparing the divine name surrogate *Dominus* in v. 15a by *qui est*, a relative clause with a third-person form.[127] However, on the level of the content, the transition from v. 14a to v. 14b remains difficult if v. 14a is interpreted as an idem per idem construction because *qui est* can then not be a simple resumption of the relative clause *qui sum* or even a summary of the entire statement *ego sum qui sum* (at least, if it has an indefinite sense).

The rendering of Exod. 3.14a can be interpreted, however, in another way. Readers will already have noted the correspondence of the Vulgate with the Vetus Latina; in fact, it follows the latter word for word.[128] This agreement with the Vetus Latina raises the question whether the Vulgate followed that translation out of respect. This would be surprising because Jerome (c. 347-420), who was responsible for the translation of most of the Old Testament books and of the Gospels in the Vulgate, referred to the Hebrew biblical text as the 'Hebrew truth' (*hebraica veritas*). This term is not neutral but suggests an added value to the Hebrew text. According to Jerome's thinking, the sense of this text should be the point of departure because it was the original text and only the original text was inspired by

125. Kedar-Kopfstein, *Vulgate as a Translation*, p. 57; Dennis Brown, *Vir trilinguis: A Study in the Biblical Exegesis of Saint Jerome* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992), p. 117.

126. Cf. Chapter 4, sec. 2b, last part. See also Arnold, 'Divine Name', p. 122: '*Ego sum misit me* is so palpably close to nonsense that the alteration of the Old Latin in that direction . . . was not to be thought of.' About *elegantia* as stylistic principle of Jerome, see Michel Banniard, 'Jérôme et l'*elegantia* d'après le *De optimo genere interpretandi*', in Y.-M. Duval (ed.), *Jérôme entre l'Occident et l'Orient* (cong.; Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1988), pp. 305-22.

127. Cf. D. Volgger, 'Wer bin Ich? Oder noch einmal zu Ex 3,14!', *LASBF* 49 (1999), pp. 9-36, esp. 26 note: he notes that 'diese Veränderung begünstigt die Koindizierung des Subjekts beider Redeabschnitte', but strangely enough only with reference to 14a and b and therefore not to 15a.

128. Matthew A. Kraus suggests that in Exod. 3.14 Jerome follows basically the VL but not 'the more philosophical rendering of the LXX'. See Kraus, *Jerome's Translation of the Book of Exodus* iuxta Hebraeos *in Relation to Classical, Christian, and Jewish Traditions of Interpretation* (diss.; University of Michigan, 1996; Ann Arbor, UMI Dissertation Services, 1998), pp. 53-54, 136. As we saw (sec. 1a, last paragraphs), there is no reason to contrast these two translations.

God.[129] This conception of the Hebrew Bible may have developed from the experience of the roughness of the existing Latin translation,[130] but is presumably also related to a feature of Latin culture because of its dependence on Greek culture, namely an awareness of the difference that may exist between a translated text and the text in the original language.[131] The conception of 'Hebrew truth' is further promoted by (a) the presence of several textual variants in the manuscripts, (b) the existence of several Greek translations, and (c) Old Testament quotations in the New Testament with a different text than in the Septuagint translation.[132] However, associated with this conception we also find an appeal to the example and authority of the apostles (rather strangely, Jerome thinks that their scriptural references usually relate to the Hebrew text and not to the Septuagint) and demarcations from Judaism (only a Christian would be able to really understand the proper sense of the Hebrew text).[133] Concerning the translation of Exod. 3.14a, Jerome apparently rejects two of his reference works, the Greek translations of Aquila and Theodotion with their renderings in the future tense (cf. Chapter 4, sec. 2b, fourth part),[134] but by contrast he obviously follows the Vetus Latina. He often did so in passages sanctified by tradi-

129. Thus Gianfranco Miletto, 'Die "Hebraica veritas" in S. Hieronymus', in H. Merklein, K. Müller and G. Stemberger (eds.), *Bibel in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition* (Festschrift J. Maier; BBB, 88; Frankfurt a.M.: Hain, 1993), pp. 56-65, esp. 57-59; cf. Frans Breukelman, *Bijbelse Theologie*, II.2. *Sjemot: De eigen taal en de vertaling van de Bijbel* (Kampen: Kok, 2009), pp. 331-37. Both refer, among other things, to Jerome's letter to Sunnia and Fretela, two 'Goths with [therefore] a barbarian language'. Presumably, the letter form is literary fiction. See Donatien De Bruyne, 'La lettre de Jérôme à Sunnia et Fretila sur le Psautier', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 28 (1929), pp. 1-13.

130. Cf. Christoph Markschies, 'Hieronymus und die "*Hebraica Veritas*": Ein Beitrag zur Archäologie des protestantischen Schriftverständnisses?', in M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (WUNT, 72; Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), pp. 131-81, esp. 139-40: the roughness of translations as reason for considering the qualities of the Hebrew text.

131. This is according to Adam Kamesar a difference between Jerome and Origen and other Greek Fathers. See Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the* Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim (orig. diss.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 41-49, esp. 43.

132. Ad (a) and (c), see Markschies, 'Hieronymus und die "Hebraica Veritas"', 144 and 146, respectively; ad (b), Kamesar, *Jerome,* 44.

133. James Alfred Loader makes this demarcation even the primary motive of the idea of the *hebraica veritas*. See Loader, 'Die Problematik des Begriffes *hebraica veritas*', *HTS Theological Studies* 64 (2008), pp. 227-51, esp. 227-46.

134. See Kraus, *Jerome's Translation*, pp. 54, 136; about Jerome's view of these translations in general, see pp. 40-44.

tion, but only if this was not contrary to the meaning of the Hebrew text.[135] Against this background, it is likely that Jerome misinterpreted the Hebrew sentence because of his sense of language formed by Latin and understood it as an instance of congruence. As a consequence, the *ego sum qui sum* in the Vulgate should be understood in the same way as in the Vetus Latina, therefore rendered in English by 'I am [the one] who *is*.'

As regards v. 14b, the translation of Jerome by *qui est* may seem less obvious because the Vetus Latina and Septuagint both deviate clearly from the Hebrew text. However, the change is not as significant as it seems: 'I am' can be considered an abbreviation of 'I am [the one] who is', and in that case the change is only from a first-person wording to a third-person one, from 'I am' (*'ehyeh*) through 'He is' to '[The one] who is'.[136] From this point of view there would have been, therefore, also here no reason for Jerome to think that he betrayed the Hebrew text. The reason that he actually opted for the rendering in question is presumably due to the sense of grammar and aesthetics mentioned above in the first paragraph, but certainly also to respect for the existing Old Latin text.

The two interpretation possibilities mentioned for Exod. 3.14a in the Vulgate may raise the question whether *ego sum qui sum* is in itself ambiguous.[137] Since the congruence interpretation has already been treated, let us therefore consider the possibility of *an idem per idem interpretation* more in detail. This construction is attested in Classical Latin, especially among proverbial sayings.[138] Most cases concern imperatives followed or preceded by a subordinate clause (therefore belonging to the posterior or anterior

135. Cf. Kedar-Kopfstein, *Vulgate as a Translation*, pp. 59, 271.

136. See the direct transition from *ego sum* of Jn 18.6 to the *qui est* of Exod. 3.14b in *Comm. Hiezech.* 1.2.1b. This reference to Exod. 3.14 by Jerome is quoted, among others, in Goulven Madec, '"Ego sum qui sum" de Tertullien à Jérôme', in Paul Vignaux *et al.*, *Dieu et l'Être: Exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de Coran 20,11-24* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1978), pp. 121-39, esp. 134.

137. Thus Madec, 'De Tertullien à Jérôme', p. 121; Arnold, 'Divine Name', p. 120 note (he notes that a translation with *Ego sum is qui est* would be 'less ambiguous'). Cf. also the *Nova Vulgata*, a revision of the Vulgate based on the Masoretic text, which has in v. 14a *ego sum qui sum* but resumes this in v. 14b by *'Qui sum'*, put between quotation marks. See E. Schick *et al.* (trans. and eds.), *Pentateuchus* (Vatican City: Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1977), p. 91 (but without these marks in the complete Bible editions of 1979 and 1986).

138. For what follows, see A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten der Römer* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1988 [repr., orig. 1890]), p. 9; Reindhard Häusler, *Nachträge zu A. Otto Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten der Römer* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 127, 231, 258; J.B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Umgangssprache* (Heidelberg: Winter, 3rd edn, 1951), pp. 159, 203.

type, respectively; see Chapter 2, sec. 6c). Examples of them are the following sayings: *age si quid agis*, literally, 'do what you do / what you are doing!' (e.g. Plautus, *Miles gloriosus* 215); and *quod agas, id agas*, 'what you may do, that you may do!' (Plautus, *Mostellaria* 1100), respectively. In both cases it concerns an exhortation to stick to one's purpose.[139] In some idem per idem examples the subordinate clause precedes a main clause (therefore they belong to the anterior type), but the latter does not consist of an imperative. An example is found in a verse from Plautus (*Poenulus* 874): *qui homo eum norit, norit*, 'the man who knows him, knows [him]' (the non-specific antecedent *homo*, 'human being, man', is included in the relative clause!). In all these cases the idem per idem construction has the effect of giving prominence to the action of the verb and therefore does not result in indefiniteness.[140] Against the background of these syntactical data, it may be stated that an idem per idem interpretation of *ego sum qui sum* is not self-evident in Latin, all the more since there is a well-substantiated understanding of it as an identifying sentence with a congruent relative clause.

If Exod. 3.14a in the Vulgate is viewed in itself, it could also be understood as an overly literal translation (cf. Rom. 9.15; 1 Cor. 15.10: *sum id quod sum* in Vulg.—similarly but without *id* in VL; the Epistles were probably not translated by Jerome). In this case, we look at the sentence as a production by the translator, not how it would probably be apprehended by its readers. This interpretation of the sentence, however, would not suit Jerome's usual way of translation, which does not attempt to render 'word for word ' but 'sense for sense'.[141] The way in which he translates idem per

139. See Edward A. Sonnenschein (ed.), *T. Macci Plavti: Mostellaria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn, 1907), p. 141.

140. Similarly A.-M. Dubarle, 'La signification du nom de Iaweh', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 35 (1951), pp. 3-21, esp. 11.

141. In his famous tract on translating *De optimo genere interpretandi* (Epistle 57 *Ad Pammachium*) Jerome makes at first sight an exception for the Bible in his way of translating: 'except for (*absque*) [the] Holy Scriptures, where (*ubi*) also the order of the words is a mystery'. According to Kraus, this exception had to do with the early stage of his Bible translation project. See Kraus, *Jerome's Translation*, pp. 18; cf. 20. However, understood in this way, this sentence makes the impression of an erratic block within the whole of this treatise. A better explanation is therefore that Jerome articulates this exception thinking only of certain Old Testament passages, those that would refer to the mystery of Christ and his church as revealed in the New Testament. Thus Breukelman, *Bijbelse Theologie,* II.2, p. 306 (a view further elucidated by Rinse Reeling Brouwer, the editor of the part concerned about the problem of Bible translation, pp. 283-360, in notes on the same page); cf. 289. The subordinate clause should therefore be understood as a kind of restrictive relative clause and, according its meaning, *ubi* could be rendered by 'as far as'. There is, of course, a relation between this restriction and Jerome's following of the Vetus Latina in passages sanctified by tradition, something mentioned above in the main text of the present section.

idem sentences elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible offers a good illustration. He usually translates sentences of the anterior (relative clause) type literally (see Exod. 16.23; 2 Kgs 25.15; Jer. 15.2; 43.11; 52.19). An example with an imperative in the main clause is: *quae coquenda sunt coquite*, 'what is to be baked, bake [it]' (Exod. 16.23). For an example without an imperative see: *Quod scripsi, scripsi*, 'What I have written, I have written' (Jn 19.22). On the basis of the examples dealt with in the previous paragraph we may suppose that in these instances a literal translation in Latin renders the meaning well. (Jerome does not translate the instances of Gen. 43.14 and Esth. 4.16 literally; is it because they do not simply express endorsement but rather resignation to what seems to be imminent?) By contrast, sentences of the posterior type are mostly not translated literally. For instance, he translates Exod. 33.19 with *miserebor cui voluero,* 'I shall be compassionate with whom I will' (he differs here from LXX and VL, which both give a literal translation of this sentence, as do the VL and Vulg. with its quotation in Rom 9.15). Such a paraphrasing is also found elsewhere (1 Sam. 23.13; 2 Sam. 15.20; 2 Kgs 8.1). In agreement with the Septuagint, he can also split the sentence in some cases (Ezek. 12.25; Hos. 9.14 [with *quid* as object pronoun, just like VL]). Sometimes, however, he remains close to the Hebrew text, but then an imperative is the main element: *mitte quem missurus es,* 'send [him] whom you are about to send' (Exod. 4.13).[142] Because of the use of the imperative there is some agreement here in effect between Hebrew and Latin. However, on the basis of the previous paragraph we may suppose that the indefiniteness typical of the Hebrew sentence construction disappears completely behind the prominence of the verbal action in the Latin translation. If this is true, then also in this case Jerome will have been misled to some extent by his own language.[143]

Therefore, neither the way in which the idem per idem construction is used in Latin nor Jerome's way of translating argue for interpreting *ego sum qui sum* in an indefinite sense ('I am who[ever] I am'). Conversely, there is much in favour of understanding it as an example of congruence: such congruence is a regular phenomenon in Latin and the asymmetry between

142. Cf. Samuel Singer *et al., Thesaurus proverbiorum medii aevi*, XII (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), s.v. 'Tun', p. 32; according to this work such variants with a periphrastic future conjugation are also found elsewhere in the Latin of later antiquity. E.g. *Fac si facturus es* in Augustine, *Tract. in evang. Ioh.* 44.6 (similar examples in Gregory the Great). A similar construction is also found in classical Latin, but rarely, notably in Plautus, e.g., *Persa*, 146 (*hoc si facturu's, face*).

143. According to Kraus, the use in the Vulgate of the indicative in the relative clause instead of the subjunctive (such as in VL: *provide alium quem mittas*; cf. LXX: *procheirisai dynamenon allon hon aposteleis*) indicates a christological interpretation. See Kraus, *Jerome's Translation*, pp. 67-68, 144. However, Kraus does not take Latin idiom into account.

main and relative clauses also favours this interpretation. In this context it should also be noted that elsewhere Jerome always quotes *ego sum qui sum* in the same breath with *qui est (misit ad vos)*, apparently making no difference between them.[144] In consequence, whereas the view that the translation of Exod. 3.14a was based on the congruence rule for predicative relative clauses is improbable for the Septuagint (see Chapter 4, sec. 2b), it appears in all likelihood to be correct for the Vulgate!

The meaning of the Greek translation of Exod. 3.14 can be inferred only from the traces of the translator's theological conceptions left throughout his translation of Exodus. By contrast, *Jerome's understanding of the meaning of Exod. 3.14* may be deduced from his writings other than his translation. What matters to him is obviously the resumption *qui est* in v. 14b: this is sometimes (three times) quoted by him together with *ego sum qui sum* in v. 14a, but more often separately (13 times).[145] Strikingly enough, he even mentions *Eser ieie* as one of the ten divine names that God would have in Hebrew; this is obviously a Latinized form of *ʾᵃšer ʾehye* and in all probability was based on a direct retranslation of the Latin into Hebrew![146] The designation *qui est* embodied clearly what God meant to him: eternal and true being, a being that could be communicated to people (*misit ad vos!*), notably by Christ.[147]

3. *Western European Daughter Versions of the Vulgate*

Let us now consider how Western European translations based on the Vulgate understood the statement of Exod. 3.14a, in particular whether they interpreted it as a matter of relative clause congruence or as an idem per idem construction. The investigation will be confined mainly to the mediaeval period (although Roman Catholic translations were long after that based on the Vulgate) and only to the more salient moments of it. The aim is not to be exhaustive but to investigate those translations whose influence extended into the modern age.

First, French and Dutch 'history bibles' will be treated. Their point of departure was the *Historia scholastica* (1173) of Peter Comestor. This last work is a commentary dealing with the major narrative parts of the Bible. Those parts were perceived as recounting history, and perceived gaps in

144. See Madec, 'De Tertullien à Jérôme', pp. 132-33 (*Epist.* 15,4; 18B,5), pp. 137-38 (*Comm. Eph*. 2.3.14).

145. Madec, 'De Tertullien à Jérôme', pp. 132-38.

146. Madec, 'De Tertullien à Jérôme', p. 132; and also Arnold, 'Divine Name', pp. 121-22 note.

147. See *Epist.* 15,4; 18B,5; and *Comm. Isa.* 18.65.1, respectively.

this account were filled in by material from other sources, in particular from Josephus. The commentary also contains many interpretations from other Jewish sources.[148] The history bibles in question have a design different from the *Historia scholastica.* With regard to the Old Testament, they consist basically of a translation of the 'historical books' from the Vulgate intertwined with a selective rendering of the *Historia scholastica.* It was apparently in that combination that the Bible was considered suitable to be transmitted to lay people.[149] With a view to the treatment of Exod. 3.14 in the history bibles it is noteworthy that the *Historia scholastica* renders the divine statement and the message to the Israelites exactly according to the Vulgate, but that to the statement a gloss has been added: *Quasí dicat; vocor qui sum,* 'as if he were to say, I am called *qui sum.*'[150] Moreover, the account of Josephus of this verse (see Chapter 4, sec. 5) is quoted here.

French Translations. The *Bible historiale* was written by Guyart des Moulins (c. 1297). The translation of the source texts in the *Bible historiale* is in general rather free, although the author suggests the contrary in his prefaces.[151] The divine statement of Exod. 3.14a reads: 'Je sui qui sui.'[152] In the context of the present investigation, a few manuscripts were consulted. The manuscript Paris Arsenal 5059 (1317) clarifies in a gloss (by the transition 'com se il deist'), in accordance with the *Historia scholastica*, that

148. For the sources of the *Historia scholastica,* see Louis H. Feldman, 'The Jewish Sources of Peter Comestor's Commentary on Genesis in his Historia Scholastica', in D.-A. Koch and H. Lichtenberger (eds.), *Begegnungen zwischen Christentum und Judentum in Antike und Mittelalter* (Festschrift H. Schreckenberg; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), pp. 93-121; Maria C. Sherwood-Smith, *Studies in the Reception of the* Historia Scholastica *of Peter Comestor: The* Schwarzwälder Predigten*, the* Weltchronik *of Rudolf von Ems, the* Scolastica *of Jacob van Maerlant and the* Historiebijbel of 1360 (orig. diss.; MAeM, n.s. 20; Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2000), esp. pp. 3-14.

149. See Sherwood-Smith, *Studies in the Reception of the* Historia Scholastica, pp. 165-71.

150. See J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus; Series Latina*, CXCVIII (Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 1855), col. 1145.

151. Many data about the French translations in this section and the following one are taken from P-M Bogaert (ed.), *Les Bibles en français: Histoire illustrée du moyen âge à nos jours* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991); for the *Bible historiale* see also Samuel Berger, *La Bible française au moyen âge* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1967 [orig. diss. 1884]), pp. 157-86; and further Rosemarie Potz McGerr, 'Guyart Desmoulins, the Vernacular Master of Histories, and His "Bible historiale"', *Viator* 14 (1983), pp. 211-44.

152. The letters and signs (as far as representing one or more letters) of the mediaeval and early modern texts in this and the next sections are romanized, but for the rest their reproduction tries to retain the particularities of these texts as much as possible (as far as they were directly accessible to me), but orthographic variants are in general not indicated.

'qui suis' concerns the divine name: 'Je sui apele qui sui.' After a reference to Josephus's mention of an ineffable name, v. 14b is quoted: 'Cil qui est m'envoie a vous.'[153] In most manuscripts consulted v. 15b immediately follows thereafter: 'Cil noms est amiz parmenablement et cest nom memoriaus de generation.' Manuscript Paris Arsenal 5057 (fourteenth/fifteenth century) illustrates the extent to which the *Bible historiale* appears sometimes to be rewritten in later manuscripts.[154] In it, there is no rendering of v. 14b but a certain restoration of the text of v. 15a. Most interestingly, a later hand added 'Ensi ie serai.' As a gloss it sounds rather strange. Probably the future form 'ie serai' was inspired by some knowledge of the Hebrew text and then put in a logical relationship with the current text ('[I am,]*therefore* I shall be').[155] The origin of such knowledge of the Hebrew text may be sought in the Bible commentary of Nicholas of Lyra, the *Glossa ordinaria*, other written sources or in contacts with Jews.[156] In the present context the gloss presumably explicates the statement of v. 14a as referring to God's eternity.

The work of Guyart was soon augmented by translations of other biblical books (taken from the 'Bible of the thirteenth century'), which resulted in the *Bible historiale complétée*. The text of the first printed great French Bible was derived from such completed manuscripts; it was edited by Jean de Rély (ca. 1495).[157] The text of the divine statement (v. 14a) reads: 'Je suis qui suis'; that

153. The data of ms. Ars. 5059 were borrowed from a draft edition of the Exodus part of this manuscript, which was kindly supplied to me by the author, Xavier-Laurent Salvador, 'maître de conférences' at the University of Paris 13. The manuscripts consulted in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in the Hague, 71 A 23 (dated 1320-1340) and 78 D 43 (dated 1370-1380) show similar readings in 3.13-15.

154. The data of Exod. 3.13-15 of this manuscript were also supplied to me by Xavier-Laurent Salvador, with whom, moreover, their interpretation was discussed.

155. About 'ensi' see V. Émond, P. Groult and G. Muraille, *Dictionnaire de la langue du moyen âge* (Montréal: Guérin, 2003), s.v.

156. See specifically Nicolaus de Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam*, I (Frankfurt a.M.: Minerva, 1971) (facsimile of the one published at Strassburg in 1492), *ad loc.* ('Ego sum q[ui] sum. In hebreo hr. Ero qui ero'; cf. n. 181 below); cf. the *Glossa ordinaria*, in *Biblia Latina cum Glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps (Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81*), I (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), *ad loc.* About the knowledge of Hebrew and of Jewish sources in the Middle Ages, see David Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible: An Account of the Development and Sources of the English Bible of 1611 with Special Reference to the Hebrew Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), pp. 93-129; Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, 'The Knowledge and Practice of Hebrew Grammar among Christian Scholars in Pre-Expulsion England: The Evidence of "Bilingual" Hebrew-Latin Manuscripts', in N. de Lange (ed.), *Hebrew Scholarship and the Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 107-28. See also the literature mentioned in n. 148 above.

157. 'Le premier volume de la bible' (Paris: Vérard, n.d). It can also be found online: http://gallica.bnf.fr. See about this work, e.g., Bettye Thomas Chambers, *Bibliography*

of the message (v. 14b): 'Celluy qui est menuoye a vo[us].'[158] The latter text is immediately followed by v. 15b, therefore without interruption by v. 15a: 'Cil nom est amy permanablement et cest memoire de generacion en generacion.' A comparison of Exod. 2.23-3.22 in the Rély Bible with this text in manuscripts of the *Bible historiale* indicates that most variants in this Bible are already found in these manuscripts (e.g. 'a moy' instead of 'a dieu' in 3.12 and 'generacion' occurs twice instead of once in v. 15b [both variants also in KB 78D43]) and that the changes in it concern in particular orthographic changes (e.g. 'generacion' instead of 'generation' or 'generacon'; 'suis' instead of 'sui'; this is, however, not easy to assess because of the development that may have taken place in the manuscripts before) and modernization of words or word forms used (e.g. 'seigneur' instead of 'sires', except in 3.16; 'ne . . . riens' instead of 'ne . . . mie' in 3.2; the article 'le' instead of 'li').[159]

The next crucial step in the history of the French Bible was the Bible of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Pentateuch, 1528). As the author himself indicates in the preface to the second part of his New Testament, this translation initially consisted of a revision of the Rély Bible towards the text of the Vulgate with regard to mistakes, additions or diminutions.[160] However, in

of French Bibles [I]. *Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century French-Language Editions of the Scriptures* (Geneva: Droz, 1983), esp. pp. 13-18. To my knowledge not much has been written about the extent Rély himself adapted the text of the manuscripts he used. The characterization of 'largely a revision and modernization of Guyart des Moulins' *Bible Historiale*' is found in Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Lefèvre: Pioneer of Ecclesiastical Renewal in France* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 159.

158. The position of the indication 'glose' is confusing in the Rély Bible since it is used just after 'Je suis qui suis[;] ainsi comme sil dist', but is followed by 'Je suis appelle q[ui] suis.' It appears that the part of the text that is explained is normally found at the beginning of the gloss (see the other glosses in Exod. 2.23-3.22 in the same text; and Exod. 3.14 in, e.g., KB 78D43). If the text is rearranged, then 'ainsi comme sil dist', 'as if he said', after the divine statement introduces the explanation of this statement by 'Je suis appelle q[ui] suis.'

159. It is striking that in the Rély Bible, Exod. 2.23-25 constitutes, very suitably, together with 3.1-22, one chapter, distinguished as such by the title 'Du buysson ardant que moyse vit selon la bible', in which respect it follows Comestor's *Historia scholastica* and Guyart's *Bible historiale*. The present chapter division of Bibles is said to have originated in the thirteenth century, but this division was first applied only to the Latin Bible. On the present division, see Walter F. Specht, s.v. 'Chapter and Verse Divisions', in B.M. Metzger and M.D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 105-7, esp. 106.

160. About the first edition see Chambers, *Bibliography of French Bibles*, pp. 60-62. Only the complete Bible editions published in Antwerp by Lempereur in 1530 and 1534 were consulted. The title is 'La saincte Bible, en Francoys / translatee selon la pure et entiere traduction de sainct Hierome'. About the authorship of Lefèvre, see the balanced view of Pierre-Maurice Bogaert and Jean-François Gilmont, 'De Lefèvre d'Étaples à la fin du XVIe siècle', in Bogaert, *Les Bibles en français*, esp. pp. 64-65.

other parts of his Bible he seems to be more independent. Let us focus on Exod. 2.23–3.22. For the most part the editions of 1530 and 1534 of the Lefèvre Bible differ from each other only in orthography and some conjunctions (e.g. *et* and *lhors* at the beginning of 3.1 respectively; for an example of greater difference, see: [*Tu diras*] *ces choses* and *ses parolles* in 3.15 respectively). A comparison of them with the text in the Rély Bible shows no obvious dependency (with the possible exception of the phrase 'mener hors de' in 3.8, 10, 12).[161] The agreements may owe to the common source text of the Vulgate.[162] A good example of this correspondence is Exod. 3.14: similar to the Rély Bible, the Lefèvre Bible reads in v. 14a: 'Je suis celuy quy [note the addition of 'celuy'; in 1534 the spelling 'qui' is found] suis'; in v. 14b: 'Celuy q[uy/i] est ma envoie a vo[us].' One particularity that may be mentioned is the inverted divine designation 'le Dieu / Seigneur des Hebrieux', which is due neither to the Vulgate text nor to the Rély Bible ('Nostre seigneur dieu dieu des hebrieux'—the possessive pronoun 'nostre' is also used elsewhere before 'seigneur').

In all probability, the use of the first-person verb form without a personal pronoun in the relative clause ('qui suis') in v. 14a in the translations of Guyart and Lefèvre simply continued the relative clause congruence of Latin in French.[163] The naturalness of this construction is manifested by a marginal note in the edition of 1534 of the Lefèvre Bible. In connection with a note reference mark just before 'celuy qui suis', it is noted in the margin that 'Celuy qui est [!] / est le propre nom de Dieu / ascavoir q[ui] est eternel / et est de soymesme / par lequel sont toutes choses / et sans luy rien peust estre. Jean 1.a [= Jn 1.3].' An idem per idem interpretation of the renderings just quoted of Exod. 3.14a might seem possible, because the use of the personal pronoun

161. See Berger, *La Bible française*, p. 311.

162. Restrictions in this sense are not made by Berger in *La Bible française*, pp. 311-12; neither by his pupil Alfred Laune in the following writings: *La traduction de l'Ancien Testament de Lefèvre d'Étaples* (diss.; Le Cateau: Roland, 1895), pp. 23-26 (but he notes that for Job the dependence is a question of impression, and it is even less clear for Deuteronomy); 'Lefèvre d'Étaples et la traduction française de la Bible', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 32 (1895), pp. 56-72, esp. 64 ('une révision consciencieuse de Jean de Rély corrigé par le latin'); 'Des secours dont Lefèvre d'Étaples s'est servi pour sa traduction française de l'Ancien Testament', *Bulletin historique et littéraire/Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 50 (1901), pp. 595-607, esp. 596-97 (after the pages referred to in particular, Laune suggests in both cases other sources for variants in the notes in the edition of 1534).

163. See K. Nyrop, *Grammaire historique de la langue française*, V (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel/Nordisk Forlag, 1925), pp. 97-98, with several examples. Nyrop formulates the congruence rule for predicative clauses as follows: 'Quand le pronom relatif se rapport à un prédicat qui représente un pronom personnel, il y a ordinairement accord entre le verbe et le pronom personnel.'

became only gradually more common from the final period of Old French to the French of the sixteenth century without ever becoming absolutely necessary.[164] This pronoun, therefore, could be thought to be virtually present in the relative clause. However, an idem per idem interpretationof the renderings of Exod. 3.14a is only a theoretical possibility because, to my knowledge, this construction was not current at that time in French.[165]

Dutch Translations. The *Historiebijbel van 1360/61* was produced in the southern Low Countries (now Belgium) by, probably, Petrus Naghel. It may have borrowed its design from the *Bible historiale* but also from other mediaeval commentaries in which the so-called *ordinatio* was an important principle; in any case, the *Bible historiale* probably did not provide specific material for it.[166] In a manuscript considered to be close to the original text of the *Historiebijbel,* Exod. 3.14a reads: 'Ic ben die ben', whereas other manuscripts have 'Ic ben die ic ben' (v. 14b: 'Die es, hevet mi u ghesonden').[167,168] In his preface the translator indicates his intention to render the intended meaning (*meyninghe*) of his source text, and with a view to this to use both a word-for-word translation and a rendering of 'sense by sense'. In practice, however, he follows in particular the first method. The *Delftse Bijbel* (1477),

164. See Gérard Moignet, *Le pronom personnel français* (Paris: Klinksieck, 1965), summary at p. 145.

165. A literature search concerning this question, in particular in historical grammatical and rhetorical studies, did not produce any results.

166. For these and other data, see Mikel Kors, *De Bijbel voor leken: Studies over Petrus Naghel en de historiebijbel van 1361* (Leuven: Encyclopédie Bénédictine; Turnhout: Brepols, 2007) (English summary, pp. 185-92), esp. pp. 116-25 (relationship to the *Bible historiale*); see also Sherwood-Smith, *Studies in the Reception of the* Historia Scholastica, pp. 147-64.

167. See C.C. de Bruin (ed.), *Vetus Testamentum/Oude Testament,* I. *Genesis—IV Regum/Genesis—II Koningen* (CSSN, Series Maior, 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977, p. 78). The text of Exod. 3.14a reads in this edition: 'Ic ben die [ic] ben'; what the use of brackets means can be read in the prefaces in the first volume (1970) of the CSSN-series, *Diatessaron Leodiense/Het Luikse Diatessaron*: the text within brackets is extracted from manuscripts other than the one that was the point of departure for the edition. In the case of the *Historiebijbel van 1360/61*, this manuscript, which is considered to be close to the original, is ms. London British Library Add. 15310. It should be added that, unfortunately, de Bruin's edition of the *Historiebijbel* only reproduces the biblical text and therefore not borrowings from the *Historia scholastica*.

168. Note that one of the *Historiebijbel*'s supposed sources, the *Scolastica* or *Rijmbijbel* (1272) of Jacob van Maerlant (see Kors, *De Bijbel voor leken*, pp. 124-25), also based on Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, mentions in relation to Exod. 3.13-15 only the communication of the divine name to Moses but further refers through Josephus to the prohibition to pronounce this name, something also found in Comestor's *Historia scholastica*. See van Maerlant, *Rymbybel*, I (Brussel: Hayez, 1858), *ad loc.*

the oldest printed edition of the Old Testament in Dutch, was derived from certain manuscripts of the *Historiebijbel* and reads similarly: 'Ic bin die ic bin' (v. 14b: 'Die is: heeft mij tot v ghesent').[169]

English Translations. The *Wycliffite* translations date from the late fourteenth century and are pure Bible translations, apart from glosses. In the manuscripts two different kinds of rendering Exod. 3.14a are found. On the one hand, a few manuscripts of the 'Earlier Version' read in 3.14a: 'I am the which am' (v. 14b: 'He that is: hath sent me to you'), whereas the majority of the manuscripts of the 'Later Version' have: 'Y am that am' (v. 14b: 'He that is sente me to you').[170] On the other hand, most manuscripts of the Earlier Version and also some manuscripts of the Later Version show a more grammatical reading of v. 14a: 'I am the which Y am' and 'Y am that Y am', respectively.[171] With regard to the use of two different relative pronouns, it may be noted that in this period and long after it 'which' is also used for persons; it is preceded by the article 'the', something rather typical of this period. 'That' was the most usual relativizer and was used until the eighteenth century for both persons and things.[172] Concerning the two kinds of rendering Exod. 3.14a, the findings in the manuscripts do not follow the ordinary rule, according to which

169. *De Delftse Bijbel van 1477: Facsimile* . . . (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1977). See also www.BijbelsDigitaal.nl.

170. Thus, according to those investigated by of Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden (eds.), *The Holy Bible . . . in the Earliest English Versions Made . . . by John Wycliffe and his Followers*, I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850) (for the Earlier Version see ms. Lambeth Palace 25; Bodley 959); see also Conrad Lindberg, *Ms. Bodley 959: Genesis–Baruch 3.20 in the Earlier Version of the Wyclyffite Bible*, I. *Genesis and Exodus* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1959) ('I am the whiche I am'). Cf. the reading of v. 14a found in the *Old English Heptateuch*: 'Ic eom se the eom' (v. 14b 'Se the ys me sende to eow'). See Richard Marsden (ed.), *The* Old English Heptateuch *and Aelfric's* Libellus de veteri testamento et novo, I (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Early English Text Society, 2008), *ad loc.* Cf. also v. 14a in the Old Testament part of the Roman Catholic translation made by Gregory Martin, the *Douay-Rheims English Translation* (1609-1610): 'I AM WHO AM' (v. 14b: 'HE WHO IS, hath sent me to you'). Produced at about the same time as the King James Version, this part could not influence this version, different from its New Testament part (1582).

171. According to Forshall and Madden, *Holy Bible*, the mss. concerned of the Later Version are British Library Royal I.C. 9, British Library Arundel 104 and Bodley 277.

172. For these data about the relative pronoun, see, e.g., Olga Fischer, 'Syntax', in R.M. Hogg (gen. ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, II. *1066-1476* (ed. N. Blake; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 207-408, esp. 296-97, 303 (according to her the use of the article was not inspired by French *lequel*); Matti Rissanen, 'Syntax', in Hogg, (gen. ed.), *Cambridge History of the English Language*, III. *1476-1776* (ed. R. Lass; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 187-331, esp. 295. See also Walther Thamm, *Das Relativpronomen in der Bibelübersetzung Wyclifs und Purveys* (diss.; Berlin, 1908), esp. pp. 8, 24.

the Earlier Version is very literal and the Later Version more readable.[173] This anomalous situation can be explained in several ways. The simplest way is to assume an initial situation without the pronoun I in the relative clause and that subsequently the renderings were grammatically adapted more or less intentionally by copyists. However, it is also possible that only later was the Early Version made to conform to the Vulgate.

It may be noted finally that Wycliffe and his followers were accused of heresy,[174] and this will have been a major reason why the Wycliffite Bible was not printed soon after the invention of printing.

German Translations. The literal renderings of the French translations of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a—with a first-person verb form but without a first-person pronoun in the subordinate clause—are perfectly grammatical, but this is not the case for such renderings in English and Dutch. In the latter cases, the translators were probably fascinated by the asymmetry between the two clauses in the Vulgate created by the presence of *ego* only in the main clause. To my knowledge, such unidiomatic renderings are not found in mediaeval German Bible translations. The High German *King Wenzel Bible* (ca. 1390-1400) reads in v. 14a: 'Ich bins der ich bin' (cf. v. 14b: 'Der do ist der hat mich gesant zu euch'; therefore the divine designation appears here in extraposition, that is, it is only indirectly, through the relative pronoun 'der', a part of the sentence).[175] The oldest printed German Bible, the *Mentel Bible* (1466, based on a translation of about 1350) corresponds closely to this reading: 'Ich bin der ich bin' (v. 14b: 'Der do ist: der hat mich gesantt zů euch').[176] The Low German *Cologne Bible* (1478/1479) renders (in the so-called unde-version): 'Ik bin de ik byn' (v. 14b: 'de dar is de hefft my to iuw gesant').[177] The German translators seem to have misunderstood the Latin of Jerome on the basis of the idiom of their native language and read it as an idem per idem construction. However, in this understanding they were much closer to the Hebrew text than Jerome himself!

173. For more about the Wycliffite translations, see Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) (the designation of the manuscripts mentioned in the previous notes is according to her system).

174. Cf. Dove, *First English Bible*, pp. 37-67 (Chapter 2, 'Censorship').

175. *Genesis und Exodus der Wenzelsbibel: Band 1 der vollständigen Faksimile-Ausgabe und Dokumentation der Wenzelsbibel* (Codex Vindobonensis 2759) (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlaganstalt, 1981), *ad. loc.*

176. W. Kurrelmeyer (ed.), *Die erste deutsche Bibel*, III. *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus* (Tübingen: Der Literarische Verein in Stuttgart, 1907), *ad. loc.*

177. Gerhard Ising (ed.), *Die niederdeutschen Bibelfrühdrucke: Kölner Bibeln (um 1478), Lübecker Bibel (1494), Halberstädter Bibel (1522)*, I. *Genesis—Leviticus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), *ad. loc.*

4. *The First Western European Translations Based on the Hebrew Text*

The first Western European translations of the Bible were translated from the Vulgate. This dominance of the Vulgate was weakened by Protestant translations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In harmony with the humanistic spirit of the age ('[back] to the sources', *ad fontes!*) they returned to the Hebrew original of the Old Testament. Of course, this implied the acquisition of knowledge of Hebrew. In connection with Exod. 3.14 it matters in particular that at the time the preformative conjugation was generally understood as referring to the future.[178] This is exemplified by the Bible translation in Latin of 1528 by Santi Pagnini: *ero qui ero* (v. 14b: *ero misit me ad vos*).[179] Of course, this was a big deviation from the translation in the present tense by the Vulgate. In this section the central question is to what extent Western European translations indeed rendered the statement of Exod. 3.14a and its resumption in the message of v. 14b in the future tense or stuck to the translation in the present tense and whether these two translations were associated with different interpretations of the text.

The rendering of Exod. 3.14 by Pagnini was quoted here for good reason. As will become clear, in the early modern age translations in Latin were a major intermediary between the Hebrew Bible and translations in the vernacular.

a. *The German and Dutch Translations*

The first important translation from Hebrew was the *German* one of Martin Luther (Pentateuch 1523). He translated Exod. 3.14a as 'Ich werde seyn / der ich seyn werde', and v. 14b as 'Ich werds seyn / der hat mich zu euch gesand.' This rendering was also followed in the Zurich Bible (1529/31, a Bible version produced by Zwingli, Leo Jud and other ministers in Zurich; Luther's Pentateuch translation was adopted in this Bible with only minor changes). In a marginal note Luther writes at v. 14b: 'Der name Gottis Ich werds seyn zeygt an, wie man mit glawben zu Gott vnd er zu vns komen mus, denn der glawbe sagt, was Gott seyn vnd thun wirt mit vns, nemlich gnade vnd hulffe.'[180] He interprets the designation, therefore, in the sense

178. Leslie McFall, *The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System: Solutions from Ewald to the Present Day* (orig. diss.; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), pp. 7-8, 17.

179. See Sanctes Pagninus, *Biblia* (Lyon: Du Ry, 1527/1528). Several more or less revised editions were made in the sixteenth century: 2nd edn by Servet (Cologne: Novesianus [Neuss], 1541); 3nd edn by Estienne in 1557—see the main text at sec. 4b); subsequently it was included in the Antwerp polyglot, see Biblia polyglotta, vol. 6 (ed. B.A. Montano; Antwerp: Plantin, 1572). About Pagnini, see Joseph D. Gauthier, 'Sanctes Pagninus, O.P.', *CBQ* 7 (1945), pp. 175-90.

180. *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, section *Die Deutsche Bibel,* VIII (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, repr. 1972), *ad loc.*

of divine favour and protection (similarly in a note of the edition of 1545; cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6e, first part). This interpretation suggests that Luther attached importance to the translation in the future tense. Nevertheless, the picture is not so clear. In a sermon of 1524, just as in a gloss to Rom. 9.15 several years before his translation (in 1516-17), the rendering in the future alternates with that in the present ('Ich bin der ich bin'); in the sermon the statement is in particular connected with eternity.[181] On the other hand, in a letter of 1530 the statement is quoted with a rendering in the future after having written the following: 'He, however, who has begun this work [of the Reformation?; cf. Phil. 1.6] certainly has begun it without our counsel and effort. . . . He it is who will complete and close it outside and beyond our counsel and effort. . . .'[182] In this context, the supposed future sense of the divine statement seems to matter again because on this basis Luther can easily quote it as pointing to God's sovereignty (cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6f, second part). All in all Luther does not offer an unequivocal answer to the question whether the supposed use of the future tense in Exod. 3.14 is significant.

In the Low Countries of the sixteenth century there was a lot of activity to render the Bible into *Dutch.* The Old Testament part of Protestant translations was more or less based on the translation of Luther. Nevertheless, the acceptance of his rendering of Exod. 3.14 in the future tense took place only gradually. The Old Testament version printed and published by Hans van Ruremund and Peter Kaetz (Antwerp, 1525) could best be characterized as a revision of mediaeval biblical texts such as that of the *Historiebijbel van 1360/61* and the *Delftse Bijbel* on the basis of Luther.[183] On the one hand, the use of the present tense in the divine statement of v. 14a ('Ick ben die ick

181. See *Luther's Works* (gen. ed. H.T. Lehman), XXV. *Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia* (ed. and trans. H.C. Oswald; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1972), p. 387; and *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, XVI (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, repr., 1964), pp. 48-53, respectively. Luther's translation of the Hebrew Bible is often seen as dependent on Nicholas of Lyra's Latin Bible commentary (see n. 156 above). In any case, this dependence may be true for the equation of the present and the future. Lyra writes at Exod. 3.14: 'I am who I am [who is !—*ego sum qui sum*]. In Hebrew it has, "I will be who I will be [*ero qui ero*]." Nevertheless the same thing is signified by both phrases, which is the eternal and immutable necessity of Being in every way, a condition appropriate and unique to God himself.' For this translation see Corrine Patton, 'Selections from Nicholas of Lyra's *Commentary on Exodus*', in S.E. Fowl (ed.), *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (BRMT; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 114-28, esp. 122-23.

182. See *Luther's Works*, XLIX. *Letters II* (ed. and trans. G.G. Krodel; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), p. 337 (in a letter to G. Spalatin, 30 June 1530).

183. Cf. C.C. de Bruin, *De Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1937), pp. 160-61; and, in particular, Aurelius Augustinus den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen 1522-1545* (diss.; Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1997), esp. pp. 164-65. Like de

ben') and in the divine designation of v. 14b ('Die is') traces its background to older sources (like, e.g., speaking of 'promise' instead of 'covenant' in 2.24; of 'Madian' in 3.1). On the other hand, the extraposition of this divine designation in connection with its resumption by a demonstrative pronoun within the sentence concerned ('*die* heeft mi tot v ghesonden') points to influence by Luther (like, e.g., speaking of 'doing service' and not of 'sacrificing' in 3.12; and of 'from children to child's children' and not 'from generation to generation' in v. 15b; as well as the use of the ending *-ite* in the ethnic designations of v. 8). The Bible version published by Jacob van Liesvelt (Antwerp, 1526, 1532, 1534, 1535, 1538, 1542) renders the statement of v. 14a in the future tense, in agreement with Luther: 'Ic salt zijn / die ic zijn sal',[184] but it retains the aforementioned rendering of the message of v. 14b with the divine designation in the present tense. Only the editions of the van Liesvelt Bible of 1556 and 1562 (published by exiles in Emden) and the more thorough revision of this translation called the *Deux-Aes* Bible (Godfried van Wingen was responsible for the Old Testament part; also first published in Emden, 1561-62 and 1565) also render the designation in v. 14b in the future tense: 'Ic*k* sal *he*t zijn / die heeft my tot v [*lieden*] g*h*esonden' (pluses of *Deux-Aes* in italics).[185,186]

It was only the *Statenbijbel* (the 'States-General Bible', 1637) that was translated from the Hebrew text.[187] This Dutch version, famous because of its faithful translation, had a certain international dimension, not only because the decision to undertake this translation was made by a multinational gathering (the Synod of Dor[d]t, 1618-19) but also because this version and its marginal notes were soon translated in English.[188] The ren-

Bruin, den Hollander refers only to Luther as the source for the Pentateuch volume of the Van Ruremund/Kaetz version, but in reality this seems rather to have a mixed origin.

184. About these editions, see den Hollander, *Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen 1522-1545*, pp. 165-66, 167, 194-97. The edition of 1538 was published under the name of Hanske van Liesvelt (see about this den Hollander, *Ned. Bijbelvertalingen,* pp. 111-12).

185. About these revisions, see de Bruin, *Statenbijbel en zijn voorgangers*, pp. 211-12 and 234-35, 238-45, respectively. For the Deux-Aes Bible of 1562, see also www.BijbelsDigitaal.nl.

186. Some minor particularities of the van Liesvelt editions: the spelling *ick* is also used in the edition of 1556; more important, the (independent) pronoun *(he)t* after *sal* is absent in v. 14b in the edition of 1562. In addition it should be mentioned that the (enclitic) cataphoric pronoun *(he)t,* equivalent of the German *[e]s,* after *sal* in the main clause of v. 14a shows a varying picture: it is (still) present in the van Liesvelt edition of 1562 but absent in the van Liesvelt edition of 1556 and the Deux-Aes editions of 1561-62 and 1565. The plural indication *lieden* in relation to the second-person pronoun *u* occurs for the first time in v. 14b (as it does elsewhere) in the Deux-Aes edition of 1565.

187. See *Biblia, Dat is: De gantsche H.[= Heylige] Schrifture* (Leiden: van Ravensteyn/van Wouw, 1637), *ad loc.* See also www.BijbelsDigitaal.nl.

188. See Theodore Haak, *The Dutch Annotations upon the Whole Bible* (London: Hills, Rothwell, Kirton and Tomlins, 1557). The first part of the translation of the notes

dering of Exod. 3.14 deviates only very little from that of the *Deux-Aes* Bible: 'ICK SAL ZIIN DIE ICK ZIIN SAL!' in v. 14a and 'ICK SAL ZIIN heeft my tot u lieden gesonden' in v. 14b (note that the divine designation in v. 14b forms directly the subject of the the message in v. 14b and stands therefore no longer in extraposition; the use of capital letters reflected the practice of the age, as we will see). In the margin the possibility of rendering the statement in the present tense is mentioned ('ick ben die ick ben') and even the possibility of using different tenses in the translation ('Ick sal zijn die ick was').[189] The same annotation explains the statement as referring to God's eternity, his faithfulness and his omnipotence.[190]

b. *The French Translations*

The situation of the French Protestant translations is more complex. Unlike Luther's translation, that of Peter Robert *Olivetan* (1535) rendered the statement of Exod. 3.14a in the present tense: 'Ie suis qui suis', as well as the designation in the message of v. 14b: 'Ie suis / ma enuoye vers vous.'[191] Therefore it continued the tradition of Guyart des Moulins (in v. 14a even literally) and Lefèvre. In the second part of a marginal note at v. 14a (to be exact, at 'qui suis'), Olivetan mentions that 'Aucuns' (some people) translate it as 'Ie seray qui seray.' If 'Aucuns' points to Luther and the Zurich Bible (Olivetan refers to 'three' German translations in the 'Apologie du traducteur', which formed the introduction to his Bible translation), then it should be understood as 'I shall be who I shall be.' However, it remains to be seen whether Olivetan himself had direct access to these translations. The first part of the note presents a direct elucidation of the rendering by 'qui suis': 'Selon le Grec'.[192] The sequence of the first two parts of the note implies that the reference to the Septuagint ('le Grec') points only to the translation in the present tense by this version and not to an understanding

(including the Bible translation itself) is re-edited; see Theodore Haak (orig. trans.) and Roelof A. Janssen (ed.), *The Dort Study Bible,* I. *Genesis—Exodus* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Can.: Inheritance Publications, 2003).

189. The printing of the divine statement of v. 14a and the divine designation of v. 14b in capital letters goes back at least to the Latin Bible of Robert Estienne of 1528. In the margin of v. 14a Estienne indicates that it concerns the divine name.

190. In the English translation of Haak and Janssen the rendering of Exod. 3.14a, 'I Shall Be Whom I Shall Be', is annotated as follows: '*Or I Am Who I Am*, or *I Shall Be Whom I Was*, which agrees in the root with the Name Jehovah. This means that God, who is here sending Moses, is eternal in His Being, faithful in His promises, and almighty in fulfilling them. Compare Hebrews 13:8; Rev. 1:4, 8; 16:5.' See Haak and Janssen, *Dort Study Bible,* I, p. 230.

191. *La Bible qui est toute la Saincte Escripture* (Neuchâtel: Wingle, 1535).

192. The complete note reads: 'Selon le Grec. Aucuns / ie seray qui seray. De ce mot est dict Eternel / duq[ue]l Genese, 2a.'

by the Septuagint of the statement in Hebrew as a matter of congruence (cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6b, second part) . It may be added that an interpretation in that sense is nevertheless most likely for the French rendering. An idem per idem conception might seem possible because in sixteenth-century French the subject did not need to be repeated before a second verb if this verb was subordinate to the first one.[193] However, from the standpoint of linguistic continuity and the absence of clear counter-examples an understanding of the relative clause as a congruent one is certainly more probable (see sec. 3 at Lefèvre and sec. 5, the digression at point 3.c). Moreover, the third part of the marginal note to 'qui suis' in v. 14a in Olivetan's Bible indicates that this phrase means 'Eternel': 'Eternal [One]'; in agreement with a conception of congruence, this relative clause is apparently understood as referring to a certain kind of being.

The translation of the divine designation in v. 14b with the first-person phrase 'ie suis' does not say much in itself because it is dependent on the Hebrew source text. From a grammatical point of view, 'ie suis' can be understood as a shorter alternative to 'ie suis qui suis.'[194] What argues strongly for this interpretation is that it is consistent with Olivetan's interpretation of 'qui suis' as 'Eternel'. Moreover, it also agrees with his rendering of the divine name Yhwh with 'Leternel' in 3.15 and often elsewhere (besides the more usual one with 'Seigneur', Lord).[195]

In the last part of the marginal note to 'qui suis' in v. 14a Olivetan refers to his annotation at Gen. 2.4. There he explains at 'Seigneur': 'ou Eternel: car *Yhwh* [Hebrew] signifie q[ui] fut / q[ui] est / et q[ui] sera.' He expresses himself more precisely in his 'Apologie du traducteur': 'Jehouah' means simply 'Est', 'he is.' For his interpretation as 'eternel' he refers to Rev. 1.4 and Ps. 102.27-28. In favour of the rendering with 'Leternel' he also notes that the Jewish substitute name *Adonay*, explained as 'Seigneur', is 'communicable' and can therefore also be applied to people (apparently overlooking the Masoretic peculiarity of lengthening the final *a* of *Adonay* when used for God: *ʾᵃdōnāy*), whereas 'Jehouah' is 'incommunicable' (as a name). In fact, Olivetan therefore proposed 'Leternel' as the appropriate rendering of the specific divine

193. Marie-Madeleine Fragonard and Éliane Kotler, *Introduction à la langue du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Nathan, 1994), p. 72. The issue is treated more extensively (and in a more nuanced way) by Moignet, *Le pronom personnel français*, pp. 145-47.

194. It may be noted that *Ie suis* does not imply a predicate in certain situations as *ego sum* may do in Latin, because unlike in the Vulgate we read *ie* le *suis* in Mk 14.62 and Lk. 22.70 in Olivetan's Bible.

195. Within Exodus, 'Leternel' is also found in vv. 16 and 18 and in 5.1-3; 6.2-8/3-9; 7.16; 8.6/10; 9.13.

name but did not carry this through everywhere (but he did so in the revision of the book of the Psalms in 1537).

In the edition of 1546, which was corrected by Olivetan's cousin, the Reformer John *Calvin,* the relationships at Exod. 3.14a were reversed: the translation in the future tense became the main rendering and the translation in the present tense the second choice. By contrast, the rendering of the divine designation in v. 14b returned to a more traditional one, a relative clause with the present tense form of the third person: 'Celuy qui est'. This rendering supports the view that the relative clause of v. 14a was still understood as an instance of congruence, in spite of the change of tense. In agreement with this, the only reference to Exod. 3.14 in Calvin's main writing, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, understands the divine designation of v. 14b as referring to being (notably in connection with the Trinity).[196] Later editions of the French Genevan Bible have the same renderings of Exod. 3.14a and b.[197] A few of them note in the margin that 'some' render 'Ie seray, car ie seray' (in this case therefore with a second 'ie').[198] Only after the revision of 1588, by Corneille *Bertram* and Théodore de *Bèze*, was the statement of 3.14a translated again in the present tense: IE SVIS CELVI QVI SVIS' (in capital letters). In this respect the translation of v. 14a was preceded by the rendering found in the French translation of Calvin's commentary on Exodus to Deuteronomy, in all probability produced under his direction in 1564: 'Ie suis qui suis' (cf. *Sum qui sum* in the

196. After stating according to the French version of his *Institutes,* 'il n'y a rien de plus propre à Dieu que d'estre', Calvin quotes the message of Exod. 3.14b as proof. See Jean Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne,* I (ed. J.-D. Benoit; Paris: Vrin, 1957), p. 175 (sec. I, XIII, 23). This critical edition has been based on the edition of 1560; according to it there were no earlier variants. Exodus 3.14, therefore, plays a marginal part as proof text in the *Institutes*. One could only speculate on the possibility that the statement of Exod. 3.14a would have been a cornerstone of his work if Calvin had understood its idem per idem nature and had connected this with divine sovereignity (cf. conclusion 4.c below in sec. 5).

197. See John Calvin, *Opera quae supersunt omnia.* LVI (ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz and E. Reuss; Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1896); his translation in his Bible commentary is reproduced and deviations from it in the Genevan Bible editions of 1546, 1554 and 1559 are indicated; for Exod. 3.14, see col. 84. Besides this work, the following editions were consulted: Girard, Geneva, 1546; Crespin, Geneva, 1551; Robert Estienne, Geneva, 1553; Du Boys, Lyon, 1558; Barbier & Courteau, Geneva, 1559; Iaquy, Geneva, 1562; Barbier & Courteau, Geneva, 1563; Crespin, Geneva, 1564; Henri Estienne, Geneva, 1565; Henri Estienne, Geneva, 1565 and 1567. Only the edition of 1560 produced in Geneva by the famous Hebraist and printer Robert Estienne has 'Celui qui sera' as the divine designation in v. 14b.

198. Those of Iaquy in 1562 (Geneva) and of Henri Estienne in 1565 (Geneva).

Latin predecessor).[199] The rendering of the message of v. 14b by Bertram and Beza reads: '*Celui s'appelle* IE SVIS m'a enuoyé vers vous', whereas the translation in Calvin's commentary has 'Si suis ie, m'a envoyé vers vous' (cf. 'Sum misit me ad vos' in Latin).[200]

In later editions of Olivetan's Bible, the rendering 'L'Éternel' is also present in some other passages (in Exodus notably in 34.6, 23). From the revised version of the French Genevan Bible of 1588 onward it functions everywhere as the rendering of Yhwh; also in this respect it has been preceded by the Bible version found in the French translation of Calvin's Pentateuch commentaries in 1564 (in the original Latin version *Iehova* had been used).

What is most peculiar in Olivetan's rendering of Exod. 3.14 is his *translation of it in the present tense.* Let us now discuss its background more precisely. The translation of Olivetan is often thought to have used the translation of Lefèvre as its basis, but an investigation of Exod. 2.23–3.22 does not support this position:[201] some particularities are indeed reminiscent of Lefèvre (e.g. like the latter Olivetan uses the verb form 'brusle' in 3.3, but in 3.2 'ardoit'; like Lefèvre he renders differently 'ayant affluence de laict et de miel' in 3.8 and 'en la terre affluente de laict et de miel' in 3.17); but others point to Pagnini ('souspirerent' in 2.23; 'exacteurs' in 3.7; 'loppression par laquelle les opprimoient les Egyptiens' in 3.9), and still others are without equivalent elsewhere (e.g. 'retirer' le people '[hors] de Egypte' in 3.10, 11, 12; 'au siecle des siecles' in 3.15b; 'quand vous vous *entrez*' [instead of, usually, *sortirez*!] in 3.21). Since he apparently does not follow closely another translation in this part of his work, we may ask how he understood the Hebrew verb form that manifested itself in the present tense rendering of Exod. 3.14a. Unfortunately, there are no direct clues to this in Olivetan's work. We have to look to contemporary reference works that he possibly

199. About the French translation of Calvin's Pentateuch commentary, see Edouard Reuss, 'Avant-propos et dernier avis au lecteur', in Calvin, *Opera omnia,* LVI, p. vii.

200. In the context of another sentence ('si suis je aussi bien armé', from Jehan de Saintré, c. 1456) Barbara S. Vance conceives the phrase 'si suis je' as an old type of word order with inversion under the influence of the adverb in initial position and translates it as 'thus I am . . .'. See Vance, *Syntactic Change in Medieval French: Verb Second and Null Subject* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), p. 267.

201. For the aforementioned view, see, e.g., Berger, *La Bible française*, p. 313: 'Après cette citation [de Isa. 40.1-4], le lecteur ne doutera plus que la version d'Olivetan n'ait pour base le texte de Le Fèvre.' However, Berger previously remarked: 'dans les livres historiques de l'Ancien Testament . . . la trace du style de Le Fèvre a souvent à peu près disparu.' He also previously referred to Edouard Reuss, with his more balanced conclusion; see Reuss, *Fragments littéraires et critiques relatifs à l'histoire de la Bible française* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1979 [orig. 1866]), pp. 329-43.

used,[202] in particular, the commentaries on the Hebrew Bible written in Latin by Agostino Steuco (1528), Conrad Pellican (1532) and Sebastian Münster (1534).[203] All three state at Exod. 3.14 that the 'future tense' in Hebrew is also used to express the present tense, to which Pellican adds the past tense. In this connection Steuco quotes some clauses as proof (taken from Job 1.7; Gen. 37.15; in fact, they concern only interrogative sentences).[204]

In grammars of Münster, a crucial figure in the advancement of Hebrew knowledge in the first half of the sixteenth century, no remarks related to this are found. His grammars are strongly morphological, and as a consequence little attention is paid to the tense function of verb forms. In one grammar he distinguishes explicitly (a) the preterite and the future as the two tenses of Hebrew, subsequently adding the present tense, as indicated by (present) participle forms; elsewhere (b) only the names of the conjugations betray the function assigned to them.[205] As this short survey already suggests, the grammars of that time tried in general to understand Hebrew grammar in terms of Latin grammar.[206] Nevertheless, not only in annotations at Exod. 3.14 but also elsewhere in his Hebrew–Latin Bible Münster expresses

202. Max Engammare investigated the references to Jewish commentators by Olivetan and possible sources and concluded from them that he must at least have consulted Steuco and Münster. See Engammare, 'Olivetan et les commentaires rabbiniques', in Ilana Zinguer (ed.), *L'hébreu au temps de la Renaissance* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 27-64.

203. Augustinus Steuchus, *Opera quae extant* (Paris: Sonnium, 1528); Chvonradi Pellicani, *Commentaria bibliorum*, I. *Libri Mosis* (Zurich: Froschoverus, 1532); Sebast. Munsterus, *Hebraica Biblia Latina planeque nova tralatione*, I (Basle: Bebel, Isengrin & Petri, 1534). As for the translation of Exod. 3.14, Steuco follows the Vulgate like elsewhere; Pellican does so in this case (with the statement of v. 14a and the divine designation of v. 14b in capital letters); Münster renders v. 14a as 'sum qui sum', v. 14b as 'SVM misit me ad vos'.

204. It may, however, be asked whether the frequent use of the preformative conjugation in the case of questions does not relate to modality (notably a kind of modality connected with politeness). Thus David Kummerow, 'How Can the Form *yiqtōl* Be a Preterite, Jussive, and a Future/Imperfective? A Brief Elaboration of the Form and Functions of the Biblical Hebrew Prefix Verbs', *Kusatu* 8-9 (2008), pp. 63-95, esp. 79 (referring to J. Joosten, 2002, and R. Buth, 2003). Cf. also John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 307-309.

205. See (a) *Compendivm hebraicae grammaticae* (Paris: Wechel, 1537), [p. 47]; and (b) his main grammatical work *Grammatica hebraica absoluta* (Basle: Petri, 1542), esp. p. 70 (where he distinguishes six 'modos', including the preterite participle, imperative and infinitive). In both manuals we meet the *waw hippuk*, which would converse the tense function in the opposite one.

206. Louis Kukenheim, *Contributions à l'histoire de la grammaire grecque, latine et hébraïque à l'époque de la Renaissance* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951), esp. p. 109; see also Santiago García-Jalón de la Lama, *La gramática hebrea en Europa en el siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Publicaciones Universidad Pontificia, 1998), esp. pp. 142-49.

a more subtle but in fact also confusing view, the idea that a conjugation can be used in a way other than the tense supposedly connected with it.[207]

In fact, only the grammatical possibility of a rendering in the present was argued for, not the probability or necessity of such a translation. As mentioned above, Olivetan referred to the authority of the Septuagint by the annotation 'Selon le Grec', as did Steuco (but the latter also mentioned Jerome).[208] The probability or necessity of a translation in the present tense seems further only to be suggested by references to philosophical or theological conceptions (from our viewpoint a category mistake!). Münster quotes a comment of 'Moses Gerundensis', that is, Nachmanides (of Gerona), about God's non-passing nature: 'he is that reality or existence that has neither passed away nor will pass away' (in fact it concerns a quotation of Saadya in Nachmanides' commentary; see above sec. 1b, middle part).[209] Pellican, and in particular Steuco, refers to philosophers (e.g. Plato and Philo) as well as to theologians. In his 'Apologie du traducteur', Olivetan himself mentions, parallel to the divine statement, conceptions of divine being by philosophers such as Macrobius and Plutarch, but there this is closely connected with his rendering of Yhwh with 'the Eternal One'.

Olivetan and also Calvin illustrate the majority view in the sixteenth century according to which the divine name was to be pronounced Jehovah.[210] This pronunciation was in fact an amalgam of the four consonants—Y (or J), h, w (or v), and h—of the divine name, and the vowels of the designation *Adonay,* 'Lord', with which signs this name was provided by the Masoretes to indicate that this designation should be used instead when reading the biblical text aloud. Understood as a third-person verb form, as then was the common interpretation, the name Jehovah could not be considered a form in agreement with the usual rules (Calvin seems to indicate in his commentary at Exod. 6.2 that on this ground some grammarians rejected this pronunciation). It may be mentioned in addition that in this age some authors related

207. See the quotation of Münster at Exod. 15.1 by Graham I. Davies, 'Some Points of Interest in Sixteenth-Century Translations of Exodus 15', in W. Horbury (ed.), *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), pp. 249-56, esp. 253.

208. About the relationship of Olivetan with the Septuagint, see Reuss, *Fragments littéraires et critiques*, pp. 352-53.

209. See also the paraphrase in Graham I. Davies, 'The Exegesis of the Divine Name in Exodus', in R.P. Gordon (ed.), *The God of Israel* (UCOP, 64; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 139-56, esp. 156 (in relation to future/present tense renderings of Exod. 3.14 in English).

210. See George F. Moore, 'Notes on the Name *Yhwh*' (Parts I-II), in Moore, R.F. Harper and F. Brown (eds.), *Old Testament and Semitic Studies* (Festschrift W.R. Harper; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908), pp. 145-63, esp. 145-58 (I. 'The Pronunciation Jehovah').

'Jehovah' to a participle.[211] If understood in this way, it would be natural to translate Exod. 3.14a in the present tense! As indicated above, at Gen. 2.4 Olivetan explains the meaning of Jehovah in reference to the three tenses. However, this is only an explanation of its meaning, not a grammatical one. It seems that only later was such an interpretation traced back to the name itself: the form Jehovah was thought to combine the three tenses of the verb 'to be'.[212,213]

Concerning the revisions of Olivetan's translation, for that of 1546 Calvin does not seem to have used the works of Hebraists such as those mentioned above, but from 1551 onward he started to use the second edition of Münster's Hebrew–Latin Bible with glosses (published in 1546).[214] However, this did not influence the translation of Exod. 3.14 in subsequent editions of the Genevan French Bible. The Latin Bible translation found in Calvin's Latin commentary on Exodus to Deuteronomy was

211. See William Alley, *The Poor Mans Librarie* (London: John Daye, 1565), pp. 122a-23b (2nd edn, 1571, pp. 93b-94b); within a section about the Trinity, he remarks: 'Iehouah is derived of this word houah, a verbe substantive before the which Iod being put.' Bishop Alley was responsible for at least the translation of Deuteronomy in the Bishops' Bible. See G. Lloyd Jones, *The Discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: A Third Language* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp. 133-35 (also notes). Presumably, this interpretation was not invented by Alley himself. Cf. Moore, 'Notes on the Name *Yhwh*', pp. 153-54, who mentions that Hieronymus ab Oleastro also derived the divine name from a participle, but understood it as meaning 'Destroyer'. See his *Commentaria in Mose Pentateuchum* (1556/57), at Exod. 6.3. He contrasts there Shadday as God's benevolent face, and Jehovah as his destructive face, indicating that the root havah does not only mean 'be' but can also refer to destruction, bad accident, as witnessed by, e.g., *hovah* in Ezek. 7.26 and Isa. 47.11. It may be added that Hieronymus ab Oleastro had the honour to be mentioned in the second preface of the King James Version as someone (specified as an inquisitor) who, within the Catholic camp, was favourably disposed towards new translations of the Bible (his commentary took the translation of Pagnini as point of departure).

212. This conception is in any case found in various literature from the first edition of the Hebrew lexicon of Johannes Simon (1756) onward. See George F. Moore, 'Notes on the Name *Yhwh*' (Parts III-IV), *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 25 (1908-9), pp. 312-18, esp. 317. (Moore refers to the first edition as being of 1752, but this concerned only a simple dictionary added to Simon's handy-sized edition of the *Biblia hebraica*.)

213. To the reader, this discussion may be somewhat reminiscent of the present dispute about the question whether Yahweh is a hiphil form ('he makes to be') or qal form ('he shall be'/'is').

214. For these data see Max Engammare, 'Cinquante ans de révision de la traduction biblique d'Olivétan: Les bibles réformées genevoises en français au XVI^{e} siècle', *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance*', 53 (1991), pp. 347-77, esp. 357. It should be added that the commentary on Exod. 3.14 was not changed in the second edition of Münster's work.

probably based on Münster's Hebrew–Latin Bible, and, in addition, on the revised version of the Pagnini's Latin translation by Robert Estienne in his Latin Bible of 1557.[215] As for the latter Latin Bible, Estienne gives there, in agreement with Pagnini, a translation of the statement and the designation of v.14b in the future but states in an annotation to v. 14a that 'the future is frequently put for the present.'[216,217] Particularly interesting is what Calvin notes immediately after his translation of Exod. 3.14a in the present tense: 'In Hebrew a future tense of the verb is used: "I shall be who shall/will be", but this is of the same force as the present, except that it designates the perpetual duration of time.'[218] As is also obvious from

215. This view is based on a comparison of the translations of Exod. 2.23–3.22. Cf. Moore, 'Notes on the Name *Yhwh*', 153 note: according to him, Calvin's translation was heavily dependent on Münster. Note, e.g., that like Pagnini and Estienne, Calvin also uses 'clamor' in Exod. 2.23 and 24; like Estienne he renders the divine name with Iehouah, and like Münster he translates Moses' response in 3.4 as *Ecce ego*. About the relative independence, nevertheless, of Calvin as translator, see Max Engammare, '*Johannes Calvinus trium linguarum peritus?* La question de l'hébreu', *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 58 (1996), pp. 35-60 (based on an investigation of several passages). For Estienne's Latin Bible see *Biblia vtriusque Testamenti*, I (Geneva: Oliva Rob. Stephani, 1557). Its main text consists of two columns, the one with the Vulgate, the other with the revised version of Pagnini's translation.

216. The annotation seems to be a revision of the annotation at the same verse in his Latin Bible of 1545 (*Biblia,* Paris). This Bible consisted of an edition of the Vulgate together with the Latin translation of Leo Jud, Theodor Bibliander, C. Pellican *et al., Biblia sacrosancta testamenti Veteris & Novi* (Zurich: Froschover, 1543). The latter version renders v. 14a in the present tense: 'Sum qui sum' (with the note: 'Ebraei ad verbu[m] habent, Ero qui ero'). The annotation at v. 14a is detailed. Among other things the subordinate clause is explained there as: 'qui est, qui fuit, qui erit. futurum enim tria te[m]poro co[m]prehendit.' In his preface of 1545 Estienne attributed the annotations to François Vatable, a Hebraist teaching at Paris. This attribution is often contested; but see Dominique Barthélemy, 'Origine et rayonnement de la "Bible de Vatable",' in I. Backus and F. Higman (eds.), *Théorie et pratique de l'exégese (. . . au XVI^e siècle)* (cong.; Geneva: Droz, 1990), pp. 385-401 (referring to college notes of students and in particular those in a Bible of Pagnini). See also Max Engammare, *Qu'il me baise des baisiers de sa bouche: Le Cantique des Cantiques à la Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 1993), pp. 199-202. Engammare indicates that Vatable is to a certain extent dependent on the Latin translation of Leo Jud *et al.* and their annotations..

217. In this connection it is striking that in his French translation of 1560 (see n. 197 above) Estienne himself rendered both the statement of v. 14a and the designation of v. 14b in the future tense.

218. The English translation of Charles William Bingham is more or less followed here, but Bingham does not seem to be aware of the subtleties of Latin and, in particular, French by translating 'I am that I *am*' (Latin: 'Sum qui sum', French: 'Ie suis qui suis') and 'I will be *what I* will be' ('Ero qui ero' and 'Ie seray qui seray', respectively). See John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses, Arranged in the Form of a Harmony* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852), p. 73. It should be added that

the text that follows, the use of the future tense is considered to refer in particular to the eternity of God.

The translators of the revision of 1588 apparently continued in Calvin's line. In doing so they did not follow here the Latin translation of the Old Testament with annotations of Immanuel Tremellius (Pentateuch 1575), although they did so in many other cases.[219] Tremellius gives a translation similar to that of Ibn Ezra (cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6a; but he does not mention him): 'Eheje, because I will be' (v. 14b: 'Eheje has sent me to you') and explains in a marginal note: 'this is I will be or I am: the future tense is namely used for continuing time as well as the present tense.'[220] In the last remark (similar to one of Calvin; see last paragraph), in which we might recognize some notion of the 'general present', the translators of the Bible of 1588 could find confirmation for their rendering in the present tense.

c. *The English Translations*

English Protestant versions initially followed Luther's example by translating Exod. 3.14 in the future tense.[221] The first was the translation produced by William *Tyndale* in exile in Germany (Pentateuch 1530): 'I wilbe what I wilbe' in v. 14a, and 'I wilbe dyd send me to you' in v. 14b. Generally speaking, his translation of the Pentateuch has been influenced by Luther but also nurtured by the Hebrew source text, as is evident from its greater agreement with the Hebrew word order and a greater literalness.[222] The translation given of Exod. 3.14 by Tyndale appears somewhat revised in the first printed edition of the complete Bible in English, the so-called *Cover-*

the French translation of Calvin's commentary was not at my disposal (apart from the Bible translation found in it—see n. 197 above).

219. See Engammare, 'Cinquante ans de revision', p. 366 (note).

220. Immanuel Tremellius and Franciscus Junius, *Testamenti veteris Biblia sacra* (Frankfurt: Wechel, 1579), p. 66 ('Eheje, quia ero' and 'Eheje misit me ad vos' with the note: 'id est ero, vel sum: futurum enim pro continuo tempore ac praesente usurpator'). It may be added that the German Calvinist translation of Johann Piscator follows Tremellius: 'Ehejeh / dann ich werde seyn' (v. 14b: 'Der Ehejeh hat mich zu euch gesandt'). See Piscator, *Biblia, Das ist: Alle bücher der h. Schrift* (Herborn: Raben, 1602) (notably the volume of the Pentateuch).

221. Most general data about the English translations have been extracted from S.L. Greenslade, 'English Versions of the Bible, 1525-1611', in Greenslade (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, III. *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 141-74; and Jones, *The Discovery of Hebrew*, passim. If there is no further reference, the English translations mentioned were consulted in *Early English Books Online* (http://eebo.chadwyck.com).

222. See Gerald Hammond, 'William Tyndale's Pentateuch: Its Relation to Luther's German Bible and the Hebrew Original', *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980), pp. 351-85; David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 306-308.

dale Bible (1535, named after the editor, Myles Coverdale): v. 14a with 'I wyl be what I wyll be' is the same, apart from spelling; v. 14b with 'I wyl be hath sent me vnto you' shows only a variant in verb form. Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch is reproduced nearly exactly in the *Matthew's Bible* (1537; the author's name, Thomas Matthew, stood in all probability for John Rogers, the editor): 'I wilbe what I wilbe' in v. 14a and 'I wilbe dyd send me vnto you' in v. 14b. The explanatory note at v. 14b of Tyndale hints at an alternative translation: 'Of this vvord, I vvilbe, cometh the name of God Iehovah vvhich vve interprete, Lorde, and is as moch to saye as I that *am* . .' (italics mine, two points as in the original; note the use of the present tense). This is even more clearly done in the marginal note at v. 14a in the Matthew's Bible: 'that is · I *am* as some do *interprete* it:: which is · I am the begynnyng & endynge: by me you haue thinges & with out me haue you nothynge that good is, John.1.a' (italics mine; 'interprete' = translate).

Strikingly enough, in English versions the future tense soon gave way to the present tense, namely, from the '*Great Bible*' of 1539 onward, a revision of the Matthew's Bible for which Myles Coverdale was responsible. The divine statement and message of Exod. 3.14 read there: 'I am that I am' and 'I am hath sent me unto you.' As we will see, the Geneva Bible, the Bishops' Bible and the King James Version will follow later. In connection with this rendering, first some attention will be paid to the nature of the relative pronoun. It is noteworthy that the relative 'that' in seventeenth-century English is ambiguous because it can be interpreted either as identifying (as 'who', referring to a person) or as predicational (as 'what', concerning a category or a quality).[223] In this respect it resembles the Hebrew relative particle *ʾašer*. As regards the tense form of Exod. 3.14, it is obvious from what has been said that the Great Bible proved to be a decisive turning point in the history of the English Protestant translations; accordingly Coverdale as its translator played a vital role in this change. For his Bible of 1535 Coverdale relied, apart from Tyndale, on the Zurich Bible and Pagnini, and therefore the translation in the future tense there agrees with what can be expected. As to what caused him to switch subsequently from the future to the present tense, there is, to my knowledge, unfortunately no direct evidence. There is no note at Exod. 3.14 in the Great Bible itself nor is there any reference to this text in the extant writings of Coverdale, not to speak of a discussion in them of his rendering.[224] From other investigations of this

223. See the main text in connection with n. 172 above and the literature mentioned in that note; see also the remark about the classical English translation of Exod. 3.14 by Beeston, 'Reflections on Verbs "to Be"', p. 11 note.

224. Most of them were collected in *Writings and Translations of Myles Coverdale* (ed. G. Pearson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844) and *Remains of Bishop Coverdale* (ed. G. Pearson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846).

version it appears that many changes were inspired by the Latin translation of Münster.[225] In this connection it is important to note that in the prologue to the Bible of 1535 Coverdale admitted to having insufficient knowledge of the source languages and therefore translated from Latin and German.[226] In fact, because of his lack of knowledge of Hebrew Coverdale was not able to make an independent judgment. Nevertheless, the question remains why in the case of Exod. 3.14 Coverdale decided to follow Münster. Presumably, (a) his theological judgment played a part (as in the case of other translators and commentators mentioned in the previous subsection, sec. 4b), besides (b) his familiarity with the Vulgate and (c) the usual rendering of it, as more or less witnessed by the Wycliffite versions (see previous section, sec. 3).[227]

The *Geneva Bible* of 1560 (produced in exile by William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby and others) uses capital letters, 'I AM THAT I AM' in v. 14a and v. 'I AM' in v. 14b (in this respect later followed by the King James Version). This translation consisted of a thorough revision of the Great Bible from the source text. In agreement with its background, the translation and its notes have in general been influenced by (a) the commentary of Calvin, (b) Genevan French translations and (c) the Latin Bible of Estienne of 1557.[228] However, (a) Calvin's exegesis of Exodus did not have a clear bearing on the translation of the narrative of the call of Moses; (b) French translations probably did have an impact, but not clearly on the vv. 3.13-15.[229]

225. See Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible* (London: Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1872), pp. 186-200; J.F. Mozley, *Coverdale and his Bibles* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), pp. 223-25; S.L. Greenslade, 'Introduction', in *The Coverdale Bible 1535: First Facsimile Edition* (Folkstone [Kent]: Dawson, 1975), pp. 7-30, esp. 23-24.

226. See Mozley, *Coverdale*, pp. 70-71, 78-79, 116-17; Jones, *Discovery of Hebrew*, p. 123, cf. 126.

227. (b) Sometimes he obviously followed the Vulgate, see Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 189; Mozley, *Coverdale*, p. 225. See also Davies, 'Exegesis of the Divine Name', p. 156: '. . . the new rendering . . . was effectively a return to the interpretation given in the Vulgate . . .'; Greenslade, *Coverdale Bible*, p. 23: 'The object was accuracy together with a conciliatory attitude to the Vulgate'; see also p. 24. (c) Cf. Dove, *First English Bible*, pp. 192-93.

228. (a) For Calvin's influence on the translation of Genesis, see Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, V. *Vision of God* (London: Olive Tree, 1973), pp. 108-11; on that of the book Daniel, commented on by Calvin in 1559 and 1560 (!!), see Lupton, *History of the Geneva Bible*, XII. *Heaven: Myles Coverdale* (London: Olive Tree, 1980), pp. (161), pp. 167-68 (for the Latin original of the letter concerned of Coverdale, see Mozley, *Coverdale*, p. 316). (b) + (c) Lloyd E. Berry, 'Introduction to the Facsimile Edition', in *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. 1-28, esp. 10-11.

229. (a) Calvin's discussion of Exodus started only in the autumn of 1559 (see *Opera omnia*, XXI [1879]: Nicolas Colladon, 'Vie de Calvin', cols. 53-118, esp. 90);

In this context it is striking that the Geneva Bible does not even mention the possibility of an alternative rendering in the future tense. A marginal note only states the following: 'The God that haue euer bene, am & shalbe: the God almightie, by whome all things haue their being, & the God of mercie mindeful of promes, Reuel 1,4.' This note, with its reference to Rev. 1.4, is obviously inspired by the note in the Matthew's Bible but further developed. It is surprising that the note refers not only to the tripartite temporal formula and the omnipotence of God (1.8) but also to his mercy. Possibly 'the good things' referred to in the Matthew's Bible (with the peculiar qualification 'good'—peculiar in comparison with marginal notes in other versions) has been developed further in connection with the preceding salutation that precedes the tripartite formula ('Grace to you . . . from . . .'; 1.4); it has in any case been made specific to the time of Moses by linking it to God's promises. As for the translation in the present tense, the unfolding in three tenses by Revelation was presumably considered an authoritative interpretation of Exod. 3.14, a generalization that would correspond best with a translation in the present tense. Also the existence of contemporary Latin translations with only a present tense rendering gave an appearance of reasonableness to such a translation in English.[230]

The *Bishops' Bible* of 1568 and 1572, a revision of the Great Bible, indicates the alternative of a translation in the future tense in the margin of Exod. 3.14a and this in rather strong terms: 'This is read in the future tence in Hebrue.' Exodus was translated by Archbishop Matthew Parker, whose guidelines for the revision pointed explicitly to both Pagnini and Münster

among other things it is striking that Calvin rejected the interpretation of the spoiling of the Egyptians (3.22) as a compensation for hard labour, whereas the Geneva Bible accepted it (an old exegesis, in this sense already Philo, *Mos* 1.140-42). (b) The notes of the Geneva Bible show a significant agreement in Exod. 3 with the Genevan French Bible published by Iaquy in 1562, e.g. 1. the preliminary summary; 2. the bush as representing that the church remains unhurt and safe amidst afflictions (this note may explain at least partly why the burning bush became the emblem of the Church of Scotland!); 3. the first remark of the note about spoiling the Egyptians: 'This exemple may not be followed generally' (Iaquy: 'Ceci est vn commandement particulier, lequel il ne faut tirer en exemple'). Engammare indicates that the editions of the Genevan French Bible between 1561 and 1570 only repeated those published between 1561 and 1570. See Engammare, 'Cinquante ans de revision', p. 362 (note). However, not all the notes could be found back in the editions of the Genevan French Bible from before 1560 that were consulted by me (see n. 197): 1 resembles Estienne, 1558; 2 is similar in Barbier & Courteau, 1559 (but with the people of Israel instead of the Church); but as for point 3, the notes at Exod. 3.22 were not found in these editions (however, the parallels in 11.3 and 12.35 were not consulted by me).

230. See esp. the Latin Bibles of Münster, of Leo Jud (note that the translation 'all ages' in Exod. 3.15 in the Geneva Bible is similar to *in omnia saecula*) and that of Estienne in 1557 (annotation) mentioned above.

as reference works.[231] These two references can explain the mention of the verb form in the source text as well as the actual translation. In the edition of 1572, 'He that is called' is added within brackets prior to the divine designation of v. 14b (note the rather surprising resemblance to the later translation of Bertram and Beza in this respect). As already indicated, the classical English translation, the *King James, or Authorized, Version* of 1611 also has a rendering in the present tense and in this case without mention of alternatives or an explanatory note. In the meantime this rendering had become a firmly established tradition on English soil, and according to the first rule to be observed the Bishops' Bible should 'be followed, and as little be altered as the truth of the original will permit.'[232] Also according to reference works such as that of Tremellius, there was no reason to deviate from the rendering in the present tense.

What can be concluded from this survey of Protestant translations in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries? In Germany and the Netherlands the translation of Exod. 3.14 in the future tense prevailed; but in French- and English-speaking areas the present tense became dominant. The various translations did not make the question of whether to translate in the future or in the present a big issue, inasmuch as they often mention the alternative translation in the margin. Nevertheless, their annotations show certain differences in interpretation. It is rather often said in relation to Exod. 3.14 (a) that human people have their being from God, and sometimes also (b) what this presupposes, that God has his being from himself. These ideas are more compatible with a rendering in the present tense than one in the future tense, as indeed the annotations in translations with the former rendering show.[233] On the other hand, references to the eternity of God are usually associated with a translation in the future tense,[234] only once with a translation in the present tense (see Olivetan). Besides these ontological properties, Exod. 3.14 is also connected with other, more personal qualities of God, notably help, protection and faithfulness to promises.

231. See Jones, *Discovery of Hebrew*, p. 133; Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, XXII. *Towards King James* (London: Olive Tree, 1990), p. 50, cf. pp. 53-54; cf. V.J.K. Brook, *A Life of Archbishop Parker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 246-49.

232. See, e.g., Gerald Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1982), p. 144; Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, XXIV. *England's Word: King James's Bible* (London: Olive Tree, 1993), pp. 19-20.

233. For (b) see Münster; the note in the van Liesvelt Bible of 1542; notes in the Genevan French Bibles of 1562 and 1565; and Tremellius/Junius; for (a) see also the notes in the English Geneva Bible of 1560 and in the Bishops' Bible.

234. See esp. Calvin in his commentary; cf. Luther in his sermon mentioned above, and the marginal note in the *Statenbijbel.*

Since they did not consider the difference between a translation in the future and that in the present as significant, the Protestant translations dealt with in this section did not use this verse to oppose a long-standing theological tradition in general nor the special form it had in the preceding age, that of scholastic theology. That such a thing was in principle possible and not anachronistic is shown by Wessel Gansfort (1400-1489), usually considered a precursor of the Reformation but in this case without successors. According to his view, the fact that the divine statement in the Hebrew Bible does not read 'I am who I am' but 'I shall be who I shall be' means that God is always 'ahead' and 'beyond knowledge' and can therefore be understood only very partially.[235]

5. *General Conclusions*

Each translation of the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a and of the divine designation in the message of v. 14b dealt with in this chapter has a value of its own. Nevertheless, we can draw some general conclusions:

(1) It may first of all be noted that the text-critical investigation of the ancient and mediaeval versions is in very different stages. As for the daughter translations of the Septuagint, the text of the Armenian version of Exodus is, for instance, well documented but that of the Church Slavonic version only poorly. Also, the manuscripts of the Wycliffite versions have been investigated more extensively than those of the *Bible historiale*. This is an important reason for the fact that the versions were treated in different and unequal ways. Although this chapter focuses on the nature of the renderings of Exod. 3.14 and their meanings, in this respect, therefore, text criticism also matters.

(2) As a matter of course the daughter translations of the Septuagint continued the Septuagint's rendering of the divine statement in the present tense. The Vulgate also opted for this rendering, and the mediaeval Western European translations followed in this respect. Some early modern Western European translations based on the Hebrew source text show continuity in this matter, but others discontinuity. In French and English translations the

235. See Heiko A. Oberman, 'Discovery of Hebrew and Discrimination against the Jews: The *Veritas Hebraica* as Double-Edged Sword in Renaissance and Reformation', in A.C. Fix and S.C. Karant-Nunn (eds.), *Germania Illustrata: Essays on Early Modern Germany* (Festschrift G. Strauss; Kirksville, MS: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992), pp. 19-34, esp. 29-30. The title of the article indicates what is beyond the scope of this section but should at least be mentioned: unfortunately the interest in Hebrew was often connected with a sharp demarcation from Jews (cf. also sec. 2).

rendering of the divine statement in the present tense finally prevailed. This was certainly also a matter of tradition and, as a consequence, of what was experienced as normal and familiar. In this last respect, the mediation of vernacular translations based on the Vulgate played a part. Moreover, even when the rendering of the divine statement in the future dominated, as was the case in German and Dutch translations, this was not specifically contrasted with a rendering in the present.

(3) The versions based on the Hebrew text handled differently the syntax of the divine statement in the source text. The following survey can be useful:

(a) The Vulgate rendered *ego sum qui sum*. This is identical with the rendering of the Septuagint by the Vetus Latina. Although he departed from the Hebrew text, Jerome apparently understood the relative clause as a case of congruence. His translation *ego sum qui sum* should therefore be rendered into English as 'I am [the one] who is.'

(b) Most of the early modern versions investigated, notably the German, Dutch and English versions, translated the divine statement as an idem per idem statement. However, to my knowledge, this rendering was also not specifically contrasted with that of the Vulgate. In fact, this rendering had been prepared by mediaeval vernacular translations based on the Vulgate or at least by subsequent idiomatic adaptations in them and therefore primarily inspired by features of the languages involved.

(c) The French translations of the early modern period deviated from the translations into Germanic languages in their interpretation of the relative clause as an example of congruence: 'Je suis/serai [celui] qui suis/serai.' In this way they continued Jerome's (mis)interpretation of the sentence construction of the Hebrew original. It is interesting to consider subsequent developments in French translations more closely and investigate how the transition to an idem per idem rendering was made

Although made on the basis of the Vulgate, the rendering of v. 14a by I.L. Lemaître de Saci is noteworthy: 'Je suis celui qui est' (v. 14b: 'Celui qui est, m'a envoyé vers vous') (*L'Exode et le Lévitique*, 1683). It suggests that a translation of the relative clause 'qui sum' by 'qui suis' had become less self-evident.[236] Lemaître de Saci belonged to the circle of Port-Royal, an innovative group within the Catholic Church at the time. His translation is subsequently found in several other Catholic

236. See Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française*, IV. *La langue classique (1660-1715)*, 2nd part (Paris: Colin, 1924), pp. 941-42: he quotes Richelet, who wrote: '*Je serai celui qui vangerai* est plus selon les règles, *je suis celui qui vangera*, selon l'usage.' See Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire françois* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), s.v. 'Celui'. The original edition was published in 1680!

versions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It also appears in the influential commentary of Augustin Calmet (1724).[237] It is noteworthy that in a richly annotated Bible with this translation, the so-called *Bible de Vence* of 1767, the divine designation 'Supreme Being' is found in a paraphrastic addition to v. 15b: 'dans tous les siècles à venir, on m'appellera l'Etre suprême, le Dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob.' In fact, this term was initially a current divine designation and was only later adopted by the Deists.[238] On the Protestant side, the rendering of v. 14a is found, besides in a few other translations, in the last revision of the Genevan Bible made by the ministers and professors of Geneva (1805, with capital letters 'qui EST'), in the translation of Louis Segond (1873/1874) and in that of Edouard Reuss (1879)—all translations based on the Hebrew text. Reuss also gives a description of the (supposed) congruency rule in question (cf. Chapter 2, sec. 6b, second part).[239]

The idem per idem rendering emerged at first only in marginal notes. To my knowledge it first appeared in an eighteenth-century edition of the Bible that—quite significantly in this connection—was richly annotated with remarks drawn from English authors. The Hebrew text would mean literally 'Je serai ce que je serai', but strikingly enough this rendering had no influence on the further explanation of it (one in the sense of existence, necessity, immutability).[240] In the Bible translation of S. Cahen (*L'Exode*, 1832) the grammatical meaning of the three Hebrew words is rendered in a note with 'Je serai que je serai' or 'Je suis que je suis' (but he gives as main translation: 'Éhéjéh qui (est) Éhéjéh', a translation he says was inspired by Targum Onqelos). It is also striking that Cahen uses 'l'Eternel' to render the divine name in v. 15a and elsewhere (in all probability inspired by Moses Mendelssohn—see his reference at Exod. 6.3—but also by the existing French Protestant tradition). An idem per idem rendering is subsequently mentioned in the notes of the Bible translation of Edouard Reuss: 'Je suis celui qui je suis.' He presupposed this translation to be known. Because there is no trace of a reference to Cahen, we have to look to German Bible translations to explain this reference: Reuss was bilingual and did his theological studies in Germany. However, he rejects the rendering in question because it would mean a refusal to disclose the divine name. The same rendering and a rejection of it on the same grounds are also found in *La Bible annotée* (1889).

237. A good illustration of a congruence interpretation is also offered by his rendering of the Hebrew original: 'Je serai (celui) qui sera.' See Augustin Calmet, *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien Testament et du Nouveau Testament* I.1 (Paris: Saugrain & Martin, 1724).

238. Jean Deprun, 'Comment l'Être suprême entra dans la Bible', in J.-R. Armogathe, *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible* (BTT, 6; Paris: Beauchesne, 1989), pp. 315-23, esp. 322.

239. See Edouard Reuss, *La Bible,*I. *Ancien Testament*, *L'histoire sainte et la loi (Pentateuque et Josué)* (Paris: Sandoz & Fischbacher, 1879), p. 10 note. In all probability Reuss was in this matter dependent on the commentary of August Knobel (*Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* [KEH; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1857], p. 28). He refers to the same example of congruence elsewhere in the Bible as did Knobel (Gen. 15.7) and mentions this commentary in his bibliography (p. 416).

240. *La Sainte Bible ou le Vieux et le Nouveau Testament: Avec un commentaire littéral, composé de notes choisies & tirées de divers auteurs anglois*, II.1 *Exode* (The Hague: Paupies, 1743).

In the *Bible de Maredsous* (1950) this rendering is mentioned as the most probable meaning (although its main rendering remains traditional).[241] It is only in the Pléiade version of Edouard Dhorme in 1957 that an idem per idem rendering appeared in the main text: 'Je suis qui je suis!' (v. 14b: 'Je Suis m'a envoyé vers vous!'), followed in this by the second edition of the Maredsous Bible (1968), Émile Osty in *La Bible* (1973), and the *Bible en français courant* (there in small capital letters, 1983). These twentieth-century translators share the opinion that such an idem per idem rendering of the divine statement has an evasive sense.[242] This unanimity is striking and might be thought to be caused by the particularities of French language. However, in his Exodus commentary of 1961, the self-made biblical scholar Georges Auzou indicated that even in French such a statement may in principle be not only an evasive formulation but also a stong affirmation.[243] An idem per idem rendering is also found in the translations of André Chouraqui, with an alternation of renderings in the present and future tenses: 'Je suis qui je suis' (*La Bible: Noms*, 1974); 'Je serai qui je serai' (*L'Univers de la Bible*, 1982); and, again, 'Je suis qui je suis' (*La Bible: Noms (Exode)*, 1993). The future rendering is also employed in *La Nouvelle Bible Segond* (2002).

In connection with these different renderings of Exod. 3.14a it should be remembered that 'Je suis celui qui suis' remained nevertheless the most usual one for centuries. On the Catholic side this rendering is found in most French translations based on the Vulgate (e.g. those of A.-E. de Genoude, 1821; J.-B. Glaire, 1834; Aug. Crampon, 1894—all three with many re-editions). But it also occurred in the first translations based on the Hebrew text (after the permission granted by the papal encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu* of 1943): *Bible de Maredsous* (1950), the *Sainte Bible* under the guidance of Louis Pirot and Albert Clamer (Clamer, Exodus, 1956), and in the first edition of the *Bible de Jerusalem* (1956).[244] On

241. For a more complete picture one should also investigate the exegetic literature. See, e.g., M.-J. Lagrange, 'El et Iahvé', *RB* 12 (1903), pp. 362-86, esp. 379, where he defends the translation 'Je suis qui je suis.' According to him this might refer to the inscrutable nature of the divine name, but it will actually point to the fact that he is, because of the resumption by 'Je suis' in v. 14b.

242. This translation and interpretation were already strongly defended in the article of A.-M. Dubarle, 'La signification du nom de Iahweh', *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 35 (1951), pp. 3-21; see esp. 11: 'je suis qui je suis', or 'je suis ce que je suis.'

243. Georges Auzou, *De la servitude au service: Etude du livre de l'Exode* (Paris: L'Orante, 1961), p. 119. Among others he refers to the next phrases, 'Il est ce qu'il est' and 'Vous aller voir ce que vous aller voir.' In this point of view Auzou is in fact preceded by Lagrange (see n. 241). See also linguistic literature: Éric Buyssens, 'Tautologies', *La linguistique* 6.2 (1970), pp. 37-45, esp. 40 (such constructions seem there to be interpreted as affirmative); Charlotte Schapira, 'La phrase tautologique', *Linguisticae investigationes* 23 (2000), pp. 269-86, esp. 281 (in relation to the 'subordonnée tautologique': the speaker expresses that he does not know the outcome or dissociates himself from the action).

244. Like other biblical books, the book of Exodus had already appeared separately before: B. Couroyer, *L'Exode* (La Sainte Bible; Paris: Cerf, 1952).

the Protestant side it is found in the revision of the Genevan Bible by Ostervald (1744) and in the first two editions of the *Version synodale* (1910 and 1911). It is striking that even in the revision of the Segond Bible of 1910 (supported by the British and Foreign Bible Society) and that of 1978 (the 'Bible à la colombe') this rendering returns again. It seems that Auzou was also the first biblical scholar to clearly disparage this translation as grammatically incorrect French.[245] For the sake of completeness it should also be noted that even after abandoning the traditional rendering, there was no outright victory for an idem per idem rendering but rather for alternative renderings such as 'Je suis celui qui dit: Je suis' (*Version synodale*, 3d edn, 1922; until the 8th edn, 1971); 'Je suis parce que je suis' (revision of the Crampon Bible by J. Bonsirven, 1960); 'Je suis celui qui est' (again!, in the second and subsequent editions of the *Bible de Jerusalem* (1973, 1988, 1998); and 'Je suis celui qui serai' (various editions of the *Traduction oecuménique de la Bible*, 1st edn, 1977–6th edn, 1995).

In all probability, the surprisingly late emergence of an idem per idem rendering of Exod. 3.14a in French Bible translations (and then only very partially) has to do with French grammar prior to the eighteenth century but also with tradition (finally inspired by the Vulgate). It would be interesting to make a comparative study of translations in other Romance languages, but this is outside the scope of this chapter.

(4) In this chapter but also in Chapter 4 and in the notes of Chapter 2 various renderings of Exod. 3.14a were dealt with. There is more or less a connection in the way the divine statement is rendered and its interpretation. In order to examine this relationship systematically the first question should be how the differing interpretations are related to the functional characteristics of the sentence constructions of the various renderings. In this connection we may distinguish four basic interpretive types of Exod. 3.14a in Near-Eastern (from Ethiopian to Armenian) and European translation history. In addition, some attention will be paid to corresponding attempts to render the divine name.

(a) The first interpretive type understands the divine statement as a descriptionally identifying sentence. This interpretation is closely connected with the rendering 'I am the one who is' or, alternatively in some languages, 'I am the be-ing [participle].' It is notably illustrated by the Septuagint (understood in its original context, the statement as referring to divine presence) and the Armenian Version (it concerns primarily exist-

245. Auzou, *De la servitude au service*, p. 118 note. André Caquot suggests that the use of the translation 'Je suis celui qui suis' in a modern translation such as the first edition of *Bible de Jérusalem* (1956) may have as background either archaism or the intention to point to the mysterious aspect of the text. See Caquot, 'Les énigmes d'un hémistiche biblique', in Vignaux, *Dieu et l'Être* (see above, n. 136), p. 20 note.

ence). However, this interpretation also occurs with idem per idem renderings. It is, in fact, very popular today to interpret the divine statement as a question of divine engagement (but see already Luther and the Geneva Bible). What is associated with this type of interpretation may be the rendering of the divine name by means of personal pronouns but this is more clearly the case with its rendering as 'the Present One'.[246]

(b) Another interpretive type conceives the divine statement as a specificational statement. This interpretation is closely connected with the rendering 'I am the one being', found in the Septuagint, or—when no present participle is used—'I am the one who is', such as occurs in the Vulgate. However, in particular in the early modern period it also occurs in connection with idem per idem renderings. According to this interpretation God defines himself as the only one who is. This implies that other beings borrow their being from him. Because it was connected with the genesis of theological thinking, this interpretation of the divine statement has exercised an enormous influence on theological thought. The rendering of the divine name with 'the Eternal One' is more or less connected with this kind of interpretation.

It may be noted in passing that nowhere in the material investigated is the divine statement conceived of as an identity statement: 'Yhwh (or equivalent) is the Be-ing' in the sense of 'Yhwh is the same (entity) as the Be-ing.' Or more fully: 'What in the Bible is called Yhwh is called by the Greek philosophers, by Plato, the Be-ing.' Interpretations of the statement are therefore not intended to correct the reader's assumption that they concern two different things. This applies even to Philo of Alexandria. Seen in this way Yhwh is not equated with Being, as often seems to be supposed, but he rather claims this for himself.

The distinction of the two interpretive types among the renderings dealt with has been taken from an existing categorization of copulative clauses (see Chapter 2, sec 5b, third part). The differentiation of the two next interpretative types can only be tentative. In fact, this differentiation is based not on a classification of copulative clauses but on a typology of idem per idem sentences (which do not consist only of copulative sentences; cf. Chapter 2, sec. 5d) according to their effect.

246. By means of personal pronouns by Buber and Rosenzweig (connected with their personalistic views) in their German Bible translation; and by means of 'the Present One' (in Dutch: 'de AANWEZIGE') by Pieter Oussoren. See Oussoren, *De stem uit het vuur: De eerste vijf Bijbelboeken naar het Hebreeuws* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1993), see esp. p. 9 note. In this rendering Oussoren seems to be dependent on Albert Koster, *Vieringen: een woord-voor-woord vertaling van het boek der Psalmen* (Eindhoven: Koster, 1991); see esp. p. 149.

(c) A third interpretive type understands the divine statement as an affirmation, one that relates to the identity of the subject. According to this understanding, God refers back to himself and, in particular, he affirms his identity with himself on the basis of a tautological construction. Such an interpretation is promoted by an idem per idem rendering in the present tense, 'I am who I am'; but it may also be associated with an idem per idem rendering in the future tense, 'I shall be who I shall/will be.' This interpretation is often found in the margin of early modern Protestant translations or in the writings of their translators. In one variant of this interpretation God affirms his identity with himself in the course of time, therefore his constancy (which may also be understood as eternity) (in this sense possibly also the Ostrog Bible). In another variant he underlines his identity in relation to others, therefore his independence and autonomy.[247] Related to both variants is the rendering of the divine name as 'the Self-Being' or 'Self-Existent'.[248] The rendering of the divine name with 'the Lord' is congenial with the second variant to a certain extent, but in any case its origin is not specifically connected with the interpretation of Exod. 3.14 but rather with the fact that already in ancient times the corresponding Hebrew word *ʾᵃdōnāy* functioned in worship as a reverential form of addressing God.[249]

(d) In Chapter 2 we met a fourth type of interpretation of the divine statement. In this understanding the statement expresses indefiniteness, notably in relation to the identity of the subject. It is best illustrated in English by a rendering with auxiliary modal verbs such as 'I may be who I may be' but also with the indefinite relative pronoun 'whoever'—'I will be whoever I will be.' This type manifested itself most clearly for the first time in the nineteenth century, when similar idem per idem sentences and their rhetorical use were noticed by Moritz Drechsler.[250] However, this interpretive type had its predecessors, as the work of Wessel Gansfort in the fifteenth century shows (see the end of sec. 4). Even when the statement is understood in this

247. In such a sense even Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus* (OTL; London: SCM, 1974), p. 596: referring to Exod. 33.19 but in close connection with 3.14 he states that it 'testifies by its tautology to the freedom of God in making known his self-contained being'.

248. Thus (in Dutch the neologism 'de Selfwesige') by Marnix of St. Aldegonde. See J.J. van Toorenenbergen, *Philips van Marnix van St. Aldegonde: Godsdienstige en kerkelijke geschriften*, II (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1873), esp. p. 48 note. Marnix of St. Aldegonde was appointed by the Dutch Reformed Church and the Dutch government to translate the Bible from the original languages. He rendered a few Bible books such as Genesis, but this first Dutch project to translate from the original languages was cut off by Marnix's death in 1598.

249. See, e.g., Frank Zimmermann, 'A Suggested Source for Some of the Substitute Names for YHWH', in C. Berlin (ed.), *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature* (Festschrift I.E. Kiev; New York: Ktav, 1971), pp. 581-87, esp. 582.

250. See Chapter 2, n. 259.

manner, it should be stressed that the indefiniteness could be interpreted in different ways, not only as signifying the inaccessibility of God to human knowledge or his freedom, as is usual, but also as God's surprising way of being in relation to us (see Chapter 2, sec. 6f, first and second parts). To my knowledge, apart from the interpretation in the sense of divine freedom (congenial with a rendering by 'the Lord'), there are no specific renderings of the divine name connected with this kind of interpretation; but renderings by means of 'the One', 'the Unique One', or 'the Name' can be suitable in this case because they do not allow attaching a particular meaning to the divine name.[251] But of the four interpretive types mentioned, this one probably urges most to maintain the specific divine name Yhwh as such in the translation in order to preserve the particularity of this name.[252]

According to this schematic survey, translations in the early modern age manifest a certain discrepancy when on the one hand they translate with 'I am who I am' but on the other connect this with the absolute being of God and the derived status of other beings. It can be understood as resulting from the persistence of older interpretations. However, a much greater discrepancy is shown by modern conceptions that connect the divine statement with God's being present but nevertheless render it as an idem per idem sentence, 'I am who am' or 'I will be who I will be.'

Although having a different scope and point of departure, the next chapter will suggest a similar conclusion as the one in 4d, as we will see.

251. The translation 'the One' (in Dutch: 'de Ene') is used by Pieter Oussoren, *De Naardense Bijbel* (Vught: Skandalon, 2005). For an explanation, see p. 1621 (but the reason of the change in comparison with the rendering mentioned in n. 246 above is not clarified).

252. Cf. Cornelis den Hertog, 'De onvertaalbare Naam', *Interpretatie* 7, no. 4 (1999), pp. 10-13. My proposal was there to write the divine name as 'J.'/'Y.' ('Yhwh' would elicit too easily the reading of it as Yahweh), but to read this name as 'the Unique One' (in Dutch 'de Enige') because of its lack of a descriptive content. One might also think of the alternative substitute for reading the divine name in the Jewish tradition: *ha-Shem* and therefore use 'the Name' instead.

6

The 'Want-of-Being' of the Divine Name: Reading the Narrative of Moses' Call with Lacan

To this day biblical narratives intrigue readers in one way or another. The use of the word 'God', however, has in general become less evident in its use than previously. Nevertheless, it occupies a central place in biblical narratives. In fact, this situation offers a good opportunity for an investigation. What role does God play in biblical narratives? How does his name, Yhwh, operate?

The present investigation will be restricted to only one narrative, the story of the call of Moses (Exod. 2.23–4.17).[1] In Chapter 2 the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a was already studied in detail. Although this is a classical text in theology regarding the question of who or what God is, in fact the whole narrative is relevant in this respect. This chapter will therefore provide an opportunity to broaden our perspective.

Unlike contrast to previous chapters, the investigation of this chapter will especially draw on psychoanalytical conceptualizations, in particular those developed by the French psychoanalyst and theoretician Jacques Lacan. Subjecting the call narrative 'at the risk' of a secular theory such as psychoanalysis is in line with the interest of this chapter: what is inherent to psychoanalysis is considering the relationships in the story in a functional

1. In general, this chapter is a revised version of an article that appeared under nearly the same title ('The Want-to-Be of . . .') in *Journal for Lacanian Studies* 4 (2006), pp. 76-98. For the most part, the text has been clarified only at several points, but sec. 4 has been thoroughly changed, including the excursus at the end of that section and a shift of the first paragraphs of sec. 3 to the beginning of that section. In its turn the *JLS* article was a recapitulation and thorough revision of Chapter 10 of my doctoral dissertation, *Het zonderlinge karakter van de godsnaam: Literaire, psychoanalytische en theologische aspecten van het roepingsverhaal van Moses (Exodus 2.23–4.17)* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1996), pp. 204-40.

way. This will preclude too hasty theological conclusions but may also open our eyes to aspects of the story that we did not see before.

However, a psychoanalytical reading may also easily misrepresent a biblical narrative. Psychoanalytical conceptualizations, that is, schematic representations of realities by means of certain concepts, are often considered keys to the deeper meaning of the text. This may or may not be accompanied by an attitude of suspicion—the suspicion that the text conceals some truth. A certain suspicion is typical of psychoanalysis, and that is certainly true in relation to religious matters. Nevertheless, read in this way, the text threatens simply to become an illustration of psychoanalytical theory, which may include reading various details into the text. The many more or less psychoanalytically informed readings of the call narrative, or of parts of it, often provide striking examples of this. This chapter can only touch on some of them.[2]

On the other hand, from a psychoanalytical viewpoint, it is possible to read a narrative in another way. A narrative may also be considered a literary construction describing certain features of subjective relationships (the relationship to oneself and to others) in its own way.[3] This aspect of a text becomes more obvious by its deciphering, that is to say, when interpreted in psychoanalytical terms. In this way the text can reveal its particularities and may even contribute to the development of psychoanalytical theory. The Oedipus tragedy of Sophocles is a classic example in this respect. This way of reading is in line with that of Lacan. His own interpretation of Exod. 3.14 also gives evidence of it, as will be shown later. It is this way of reading that will be pursued in this chapter.

Even when reading a text in this way, a (self-)critical attitude to the use of psychoanalytical conceptualizations is important. Suspicion should always be accompanied by a certain self-suspicion. That means questioning whether interpretations are sufficiently covered by the facts of the text. In this respect another feature of Lacanian listening and reading is relevant. As in the case of a clinical psychoanalysis, it is alert to what cannot be said for some reason, but the point of departure for that is attention to the letter of the text of what is said. Because of the latter characteristic, insights from linguistic, literary and historical approaches can easily be integrated in a Lacanian way of reading.[4] This is, of course, important in connection with

2. My dissertation discusses the following authors in relation to Exodus 3-4: S. Freud, T. Reik, E. Fromm, L. Szondi, D.F. Zeligs, H.L. Muslin, E. Drewermann, N. Jeammet, M. Balmary and L. Althusser. See *Het zonderlinge karakter van de godsnaam*, pp. 205-14 and 234-38.

3. Cf. Ginette Michaux, 'Psychanalyse et art dans l'orientation lacanienne: une introduction', *Quarto* 40/41 (1990), pp. 3-6, esp. 4-5.

4. Cf. Michaux, 'Psychanalyse et art', p. 5.

a text coming from such a different language, culture and era as is the case with the narrative of Moses' call.

1. *Yhwh as Third*

The beginnings of the story of Moses' 'becoming big' (2.11-15) and the story of his call (2.23-4.17) are similar: 'it happened in those days' and 'it happened in those many days' respectively. Together with the use of the same crucial words ('seeing' and 'striking') this fact suggests a close relationship between the two stories. This relationship was already dealt with before (see Chapter 2, sec. 5b), but its nature can now be investigated more closely.

The story of becoming big is connected with the preceding part of Exodus, the depiction of the situation of Israel in Egypt and the story of the birth of Moses. From this, Moses acquires a double, contradictory position: he is born a Hebrew but bred an Egyptian. The question is therefore one of the two: either he chooses the side of the Hebrews or he opts for that of the Egyptians.

In the first scene of this story Moses looks on the burdens of his Hebrew 'brothers'. He sees how an Egyptian is striking one of them. Moses strikes then, like the Egyptian, but it is directed against the Egyptian. Therefore, Moses sympathizes with the Hebrew but imitates the Egyptian. At the same time he fears revenge: he buries his deed in the sand.

From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the register of the Imaginary and more specifically the mirror relationship dominates in this scene. In his behaviour Moses reflects the suffering of his people but also the violence of the Egyptians. Because of the dyadic nature of the relationship, discord can only lead to a fatal confrontation: it is either you or I. Another possibility, based on something else, is excluded. The next scene illustrates this point.

In the second scene of the story Moses notices two Hebrews fighting. This fight shows that Hebrews strike one another, just as the Egyptians do to them. Moses asks the 'evildoer': 'Why do you strike your fellow?' (2.13). The man answers: 'Who has placed you as authority and judge over us? 'Are you saying [that you are going] to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?' (2.14). These questions too have the Egyptian rule on the horizon. Therefore, the Egyptian rule has affected not only the mind of the oppressors but also the heart of the oppressed.

The questions of the Hebrew 'brother' are malicious in their intent: overwhelming Moses by a counter-question and so neutralizing his question. At the same time the questions are much to the point. If Moses did not get his power from Pharaoh (cf. 1.11), from whom, then, did he? And are his means of exercising authority not the same as those of Pharaoh—violence? (The word 'kill' is also used in 2.15 but there with Pharaoh as subject!)

Will that not imply the death of his brothers, corrupted as they too may be? These questions show that Moses' act of resistance does not distinguish itself clearly from the rule of the Egyptians. They signify, therefore, the failure of his intervention.[5]

The first objection of Moses in the call narrative closely corresponds to the difficulties in the story of his becoming big. He says: 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh . . . ?' (3.11). Moses is captured by the image of Pharaoh (who serves in relation to him as an ideal-ego in some respect); he measures himself against him, and then appears to be no match at all. The second objection of Moses (3.13) also fits that story: the question of the Hebrew brother is conveyed by the question of authorization that, according to Moses, the Israelites will surely (*hinnê*, 'Look!') formulate. In this case, this would take shape, however, by asking for the name, the identity of his sender.

In this respect the second objection clearly indicates that the objections are situated in a new context. The story of the call of Moses introduces Yhwh-God as a new, third party. The latter's special position comes more sharply into relief by his rather late emergence in the unfolding story of Exodus, and only after the desperate situation of the Israelites has become completely clear. Moreover, the text suggests that he resides originally above (see Exod. 2.23 and 3.8) and therefore has an independent, superior position.

Roughly speaking, also in the call narrative, 'seeing' is the beginning (3.7) and 'striking' the end (3.20), but in the meantime a reorientation is now elaborated, notably in the discourse of Yhwh and his answers to the objections of Moses. Herein a perspective is shown (3.8: 'a land good and spacious') and a strategy developed (3.16: the calling in of the elders of Israel; 3.18: a request to the Egyptian king for a respite because of religious obligations).

Psychoanalytically speaking, the register of the Symbolic is preponderant in the call narrative. The call story exemplifies that, in relation to the Imaginary, the Symbolic reveals itself as a third term, a term exceeding, at least in principle, the dyadic mirror relationship. It also illustrates that this third term is not isolated but is connected with a network of signifiers: the introduction of Yhwh is part of a new story. It is this connection in the call narrative that actually enables the breakdown of old relationships and the creation of new ones.

5. Especially this paragraph betrays influence from W. van der Spek, 'Exegese en politiek', in K.[A.] Deurloo and R. Zuurmond (eds.), *De bijbel maakt school: Een Amsterdamse weg in de exegese* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1984), pp. 108-14.

Prompted by an 'editorial' cue in the text, the same initial words, this section investigated the nature of the relationship between two nearly successive narratives in Exodus by means of Lacanian concepts. The difference between the Imaginary and the Symbolic is certainly not inherent in the text, but these concepts are nevertheless aids to clarifying the difference between the two narratives. The preceding interpretation suggests that the difference between the story of becoming big and the call story should not be understood in moralistic terms, as has usually happened in the history of exegesis.[6] The issue is not the difference between, on the one hand, a high-handed murder and, on the other, an intervention sanctioned by the Most High, one that will also eventually lead to the death of malicious people (Pharaoh and his accomplices). The point is rather a change of orientation and perspective, of the nature of the relationships in which Moses operates.

2. *Yhwh's Sending and Ego-Ideal*

According to the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, in his essay about ideology, the interpellation of Moses by God results in a mirror relationship between them, in which Moses recognizes his subjection to God.[7] The last specification indicates that in fact Althusser understands the actual relationship as asymmetrical. This is also suggested by his notion of God as guarantee.[8]

A good point of departure for a closer consideration of the issue is the remarkable parallelism between Exod. 3.7-8 and 3.9-10. This matter was already touched on in Chapter 1 (sec. 4). First (3.7-8) Yhwh communicates that he has noticed the misery of the Israelites and is going to rescue them and bring them to a good and spacious land; then (3.9-10) he urges Moses to look along with him (*hinnê*, 'Look!') and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt ('Go!'). These two pairs of verses are often attributed to different sources, but in that way one at least threatens to join the viewpoint of Moses as expressed in his objection of 3.11, when he isolates himself as agent from God, his commissoner. This idea, however, is refuted by God's answer in v. 12: '[The point is] that I will be with you!' Alternatively, we may try to clarify the connection between the two pairs of verses in question. From a psychoanalytical point of view, the relationship between Moses and Yhwh

6. See the description by Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus* (OTL; London: SCM, 1974), esp. pp. 40-42 (but also 33-40); further Scott M. Langston, *Exodus through the Centuries* (BBC; Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 35-37.

7. Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)' (orig. French 1970), in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (trans. B. Brewster; London: NLB, 1977), pp. 121-73, esp. 167.

8. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 168.

could be understood in terms of mirroring but only if some adjustments are made.

To begin with, Moses has to execute only the first part of what Yhwh says he is going to do. Therefore, he will reflect only certain aspects of Yhwh. Further, Moses objects to his mission throughout the call story but never does he do so openly, through lack of daring. What is especially revealing in this respect is his last objection in 4.13: 'For my part, Lord, send, please, the one you can send.' It contains in fact a 'no' under the guise of a 'yes' (see also Chapter 2, sec. 6f, last part).

From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, this passage may be interpreted in terms of a constituting ego-ideal. This concept (as opposed to that of ideal-ego) indicates the deflection that mirroring undergoes in connection with the Symbolic. The aspects that Moses should take care of (3.10) are related to the grand design of Yhwh (3.8) in a metonymic way as a part to the whole. The big Other (Yhwh) provides here the basis of the ideal by setting certain reference points, to which adherence by the subject (Moses) would please the Other.

The Other also functions as a guarantee of the ideal. The nature of this guarantee is clarified afterwards. In reply to Moses' first objection, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?' (3.11), Yhwh not only offers a promise, '[The point is] that I will be with you', but also gives Moses a sign to indicate that it is really he, Yhwh, who is sending: 'when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will [all] serve God on this mountain' (3.12). The sign does not consist of some kind of proof, as would be ordinary, but has the form of a vision, one implying that the Other is in want of the support of his subjects (cf. Chapter 1, sec. 6, point 4). Psychoanalytically speaking, it is therefore structured like a basic fantasy construction (with its complementary aspect).

In sum, it appears that the parallelism between 3.7-8 and 3.9-10 raises the question how the protagonists of each part relate to each other. The concept of the ego-ideal offers some aid in clarifying the nature of the connection. It indicates that this relationship is not only a question of representation but also puts Moses' action into a perspective that clearly exceeds himself. That this is indeed relevant is subsequently underlined through the sign in 3.11-12.

3. *The Logic of the Name*

Let us now deal with the famous divine statement in Exod. 3.14a. Lacan pays repeated attention to this statement in his seminars.[9] The following

9. To my knowledge, it is referred to in the following seminars: S 3 (25 January 1956; 20 June 1956); S 4 (6 or 13 March 1957); S 5 (27 November 1957); S 7 (23

study of the statement will discuss his remarks as far as they relate to the content and nature of this statement.[10]

Initially Lacan quotes the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a in its traditional French form: 'I am the one who am' (*Je suis celui qui suis*; see Chapter 5, sec. 4b and the digression of sec. 5). However, his commentary on the Ten Commandments in his seminar on ethics involves a change; from then on he renders it as 'I am what I am' (*Je suis ce que je suis*).[11] In his commentary he quotes the English translation 'I am that I am', the classical one of the King James Version (see Chapter 5, sec. 4c). Hebrew scholars would have said that this translation approaches the 'articulation' of the Hebrew original most closely (S 7: 23 December 1959 / F 1986, p. 98).[12] The background of this positive evaluation is, in all likelihood, that the relative pronoun 'that' in seventeenth-century English can mean both 'who' and 'what', and so it resembles the Hebrew particle *'ašer* (see Chapter 5, sec. 4c). In interpreting 'that' only as 'what' (*ce que*) Lacan, however, restricts the options.

The distinction, as made by Lacan, between the 'subject of the enunciation' (*sujet de l'énonciation*) and the 'subject of the enunciated' or 'of the statement' (*sujet de l'énoncé*) offers a good reference point for begin-

December 1959; 16 March 1960); S 8 (28 June 1961); S 11A (20 November 1963); S 13 (9 February 1966); S 14 (11 January 1967; 25 January 1967; 26 April 1967); S 16 (4 December 1968; 11 December 1968; 8 January 1969; 4 June 1969); S 17 (21 January 1970); S 20 (16 January 1973); S 22 (15 April 1975).

Inasmuch as they occur in the main text, the abbreviations S 3, 4 etc. refer to the list of Lacan's work at the end of this chapter. Dates and page numbers after the sign / will refer to the edition used. F points to the page number of the French edition; if bracketed, [F], it also signals that this page numbering is also indicated in the English translation.

10. Cf. Erik Porge, *Les noms du père chez Jacques Lacan: Ponctuations et problématiques* (Ramonville Saint-Agne: Erès, 1997), pp. 160-70: he makes a first attempt to situate Lacan's remarks about Exod 3.14 within the whole of his work.

11. Probably this new rendering was inspired by the first edition of the *Bible de Jérusalem*, of which a one-volume edition appeared in 1956. The rendering is mentioned there as a possibility in a note. In this note the renderings 'Je suis celui qui suis' (the rendering of the main text) and 'Je suis celui qui est' are situated as being in line with the Septuagint, although they are not understood as a matter of absolute being but of existence. If the new rendering had been connected with the appearance of this edition, it is rather easy to understand that simultaneously with the introduction of his new rendering Lacan rejects the two renderings last mentioned as inspired by Greek metaphysics.

Note that already earlier in his seminar S 5 (18 March 1958), in connection with a discussion of Shakespeare's Hamlet, Lacan mentioned the statement 'I am what I am', but then only as a message of the Other and not in reference to the biblical text.

12. Here, the English translator of Lacan renders 'articulation' as 'formulation', although it apparently refers to the connection between the clauses of the statement (S 7 / English: 1999, p. 81).

ning an investigation of the divine statement and its interpretation by Lacan (although he himself does not use this distinction in this context). The distinction between 'enunciation' and 'enunciated' has been borrowed from French linguistics and is based on the fact that the act of producing the enunciated is reflected in some features of the enunciated (e.g. the use of the personal pronouns I and you). In psychoanalysis, the necessity of such a distinction is manifested by, for instance, a slip of the tongue or a disavowal ('I would not like to say to you that . . .') inasmuch as they consist of formations of the unconscious. Such things indicate that a distinction should be made between the subject such as it defines itself in its usual talk, the subject of the statement, identical to the ego, and the subject that arises in such moments of distorted speech. The latter subject, the subject of enunciation, is therefore an intermittent, (radio-like) 'fading' phenomenon. In this respect, there is a big difference between the psychoanalytical concept of subject and its philosophical counterpart, according to which the subject is usually some underlying constant.

Initially, the first *'ehye* ('I am', according to Lacan's rendering) seems to prepare a definition of the subject in one way or another, and as such it concerns the subject of the statement, the subject described by what has been said. However, the relative clause headed by *'ašer* repeats only *'ehye*. This idem per idem construction gives the sentence an indefinite sense (see Chapter 2, sec. 6c). If we relate it to the request for God's name with which Moses' preceding deliberation ends (3.13), then it obviously does not give an answer. For a moment it may even seem to fend off any answer at all. Lacan's rendering of its impact as 'fuck off [*allez vous faire foutre!*]' is in agreement with this aspect (S 16: 4 December 1968). This also applies to his qualification of the sentence as 'a completely different [that means here: non-Wittgensteinian] form of tautology' since the context speaks of 'not being named' (S 17: 21 January 1970 / 2007, p. 74; cf. 67-68 [F]) and therefore suggests a tautology in the trivial sense of only repeating the same thing with the effect of saying nothing at all. Quite a few exegetes express themselves in more subtle ways than Lacan but nevertheless share the opinion that the divine answer amounts to a denial.

This way of interpreting Exod. 3.14a, however, can easily be questioned. The divine statement may seem at first face a refusal; its form suggests nevertheless that it is not identical with a denial. In this connection it may be observed that the subject is indicated by the I-morpheme, the initial *'(e)* of *'ehye*, or, in other words, the I-form of the verb, whereas the predicate—what is said about the subject—is represented by the relative particle *'ašer* (thus 'who' / 'what'). These remarks apply both to the main clause and to the subordinate clause. However, what the relative particle means remains unclear and enigmatic. In one passage Lacan himself interprets the statement in that sense: it 'will mean, you will not know anything of my truth

between this "I am" put in front and the one that comes after; the opacity subsists of this "what" (*ce que*) that remains as such irremediably closed' (S 13: 9 February 1966). If we focus on what this says about the subject, we can quote the general remark of Lacan that the I-shifter (pronominal form) 'designates the subject of the enunciation but does not signify him' (E 1, p. 800 [F]). The divine statement refers to the one who is speaking but does not say something definite about him.

As for Exod. 3.14a, Lacan himself has hinted in this direction. He can paraphrase the divine statement as 'I am what I is', or even as: 'I am what is the I' (S 16: 11 December 1968). From the context ('the truth speaks "I" [*je*]') it is clear that this I is not the ego, the I of common self-understanding. Many years earlier in his seminar he had already pointed to the fleeting, elusive nature of the I of Exod. 3.14 (S 3: 20 June 1956 / 1993, pp. 324-25 [F]).

To my knowledge, no exegete before Lacan has focused as much attention on the first-person form of the divine statement in Exod. 3.14a as he has done.[13] He often notes, rightly, the contrast of the original statement with subsequent tradition, which following on the Greek translation of the Septuagint puts being in the forefront (e.g. S 16: 4 December 1968).[14]

This interpretation of Exod. 3.14a, however, raises the question whether it finds support in the context and notably in Moses' preceding objection. In fact, this issue is absent from Lacan's interpretation. It will hereafter be dealt with within the context of another discussion of the statement.

The divine name belongs to the category of proper names. Therefore, a comparison between the way in which the divine name is understood in the text and the characterization of the proper name by Lacan can be useful.

Lacan himself seems to hint at a connection in his one-session seminar 'The Names-of-the-Father'. He says there, starting with a play on words: 'I am: I am (or, I follow) the procession (*Je suis, je suis le cortège*). There is no other meaning to be given this *I am* than its being the name *I am*' (S '11A': 20 November 1963 / 1990, p. 90; 2005, p. 92). Presumably, Lacan states here that the 'I am' (*'ehye*) in 'I-am has sent me to you' of Exod. 3.14b

13. Cf., however, Carl Heinz Ratschow, *Werden und Wirken: Eine Untersuchung des Wortes* hajah *als Beitrag zur Wirklichkeitserfassing des Alten Testaments* (BZAW, 70; orig. diss.; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1941), pp. 82-83: he also emphasizes the importance of the use of the first person but interprets this, too quickly, as expressing God's 'Personcharakter'.

14. It is, however, doubtful whether the verse in this translation has a metaphysical sense, as Lacan and many others think. See Chapter 4 above. It is noteworthy that Lacan sees (the concept of) being as an (imaginary) effect of the signifier (as such it is distinguished from the notion of existence). See the survey by Colette Laterasse, 'Le Dieu des savants et des philosophes et le Dieu d'Abraham', *Pas Tant: Découverte freudienne* 29 (Dec. 1991), pp. 17-36.

should be understood in the context of 'I am what I am' in 3.14a, quoted by him just before. Since he attributes an evasive sense to this statement (as indicated above), he can subsequently firmly connect this I-am with being just a name, without any special meaning. This brings to mind his understanding of the name in the seminar 'Identification', in which the marking, referring function of a proper name is related to its distinctive sonorous structure, its 'letter value' (S 9: 20 December 1961). This relation is demonstrated by the fact that a name is only transliterated, not translated in another language (S 9: 10 January 1962).[15] Lacan illustrates this by one of his well-known phrases: 'I am called Lacan in all languages' (ibid.).

In 'Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis' Lacan emphasizes, contrary to what is often stated and contrary even to what he himself led us to believe previously, that a proper name is certainly not without any kind of meaning (*espèce de signification*; S 12: 6 January 1965). In this connection he refers to the meaningful effects that the presentation of himself as Lacan may evoke. A primary reason is that a proper name is always met in some context, for instance the self-presentation in a society implies that he is not unknown in this society. It may also be that the name had already been heard before. 'Then of course it will be enriched' by some information. He concludes subsequently that 'To say that a proper name is, in one word, without meaning is something grossly erroneous. On the contrary, it carries with itself much more than meanings, [namely] a whole sum of notices (*toute une espèce de somme d'avertissements*).' In fact, in this somewhat wavering part of discourse Lacan seems to be attempting to define something beyond sense, namely the encyclopaedic information connected with a name.[16] In my view, this is exactly what is involved in the interpretation of the divine name in Exod. 3.14: it does not simply intend the retrieval of the common-word meaning of the name but concerns a characterization of God on the basis of what is known about him from the ancestral narratives and his present initiative (see Chapter 2).

In a complicated passage Lacan states further:

> it is not as specimen (of the species) pinned down as unique . . . that the particular [subject] (*le particulier*) is named by a proper name; it is in this

15. As indicated in the previous chapters, the divine name Yhwh is usually not translated (although some try, see Chapter 5, sec. 5, conclusion 4); but mostly it is also not transliterated in other languages but replaced by a surrogate name, predominantly 'the Lord' (usually written in capital letters or, after one capital, the other letters in small capitals) in line with the Septuagint and the Vulgate.

16. See about this John M. Anderson, *The Grammar of Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 99, 104, 158. He distinguishes between the (minimal, linguistic) sense of a name (esp. the indication of gender) and the encyclopaedic information connected with it.

> (*ce*) sense: that he is irreplaceable. That is that he can be missing (*il peut manquer*), that it (*il*) suggests the level of lack (*manque*) (S 12, 6 January 1965).

The reference of the pronoun *il* seems to shift here from the subject to the proper name. The real difficulty, however, is what lack is meant and how irreplaceability and lack are connected. After the statement just quoted Lacan says about the proper name that 'it is not qua [unique] individual that I am called Jacques Lacan, but qua something which may be lacking, by means of what [of which lack] this name is going to what? . . . to cover another lack.' Seven months before, he used nearly the same words when speaking about 'separation' (S 11: 27 May 1964 / 1998, p. 215). In that case the context indicates which lacks are meant: the lack that the disappearance of the subject would entail and the lack of the Other (that is, the fact that the Other cannot found itself). Against this background we can interpret the passage quoted. In general, a signifier makes it conceivable that there is something absent, missing from its place (as in a library the mention in a catalogue makes the absence of a book on the shelf observable—S 4: 28 November 1956). As its place-holder among the signifiers the proper name has this function in relation to the subject in particular. By imagining its (his/her) possible absence as a fundamental loss to the Other, the subject makes itself a complement to the lack of the Other and thus irreplaceable (this is just the fundamental structure of fantasy, alluded to above at the end of sec. 2).

The notion of lack (*manque*) plays a crucial role in the theory of Lacan. Already early in his seminars he coined the term *manque-à-être* (see S 4: 3 July 1957). This term marks the state of the subject as it results from the entrance into language and the concomitant loss of the (natural) object and inception of desire. The notion 'lack' makes clear that the subject is of a different order than that of things (although this is its reference point by the function of the imaginary). The notion *manque-à-être* has obviously been inspired by that of *manque d'être* of Sartre as characteristic of human being, something connected with the reality of desire.[17] As English translation of *manque-à-être* Lacan himself proposed the neologism 'want-to-be', but 'want-of-being' may be more idiomatic.[18]

17. See Anthony Wilden, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis by Jacques Lacan, Translated with Notes and Commentary* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968), p. 131. See J.-P. Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), pp. 128-34. In S 2 (15 May 1955) and even initially in S 4 (8 May 1957) the term *manque d'être* is still used.

18. See Alan Sheridan 'Translator's Note', in Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection* (trans. A. Sheridan; London: Tavistock, 1977), p. xi; and Alain Vanier, 'Want of Being / Lack of Being', in Alain de Mijolla (ed.), *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, III (Detroit: Gale, 2005), pp. 1847-48, respectively.

The passage quoted about the proper name and its relation to lack cannot be straightforwardly applied to Exod. 3.13-15 because the proper name in these verses does not concern the name of an individual such as Moses or Lacan. Nevertheless, the question may be put whether the verses are related to a lack. In this connection a remark of Lacan in the seminar 'R.S.I.' is significant: 'They [the Jews] have explained well what they call the Father. They engender him at the place of a hole that cannot even be imagined—"I am what I am" is a hole, isn't it?' (S 22: 15 April 1975). Lacan seems to point out here a paradox in relation to the divine statement. The relating of the divine statement to a hole has presumably to do with the elusive nature of the I in question. The supposed engendering of a Father-God (for more about God as father see the excursus about this at the end of this section) pertains to the fact that just this elusive I is connected with a certain divine figure.

In relation to the narrative of Exodus 3-4 the previous considerations about a double lack can now be applied as follows. The divine statement is an answer to Moses' preceding question. Moses clearly indicates that he cannot answer the would-be request for the divine name by the Israelites. The underlying problem is the question how he can ever refer to the God of the ancestors to legitimize his prophetic mission, although this is the first of its kind in history (see Chapter 2, sec. 5b). In this respect a lack on Moses' side manifests itself (here on the level of having, and not so much of being). Against this background, the divine answer indicates that the enunciating I exceeds the level of 'statement' and thus the tradition of the ancestors. As far as God is also not able to resort to the ancestral tradition, it might be said that a fundamental lack also manifests itself on his side. It is with this feature that the divine name is subsequently connected.

According to 3.14b Moses has to say to the Israelites that he is sent by Ehyeh, whereas according to 3.15a he has to refer to Yhwh. The name Ehyeh is reminiscent of the statement in 3.14a and as such of the subject of enunciation. The name Yhwh is the old divine name, but according to 3.15b it is the name still to be used. As succeeding Ehyeh it starts to mean 'he (will be / is).' As a third-person form, it would ordinarily indicate the 'subject of the statement', and therefore in principle be linked to what has been said; that is, in this particular context, the tradition of the ancestors. However, since this name is mentioned following Ehyeh, a first-person form, it is connected with this, and thus re-assessed in its meaning as the human counterpart of this name form.

On the basis of the theorization of Lacan in the seminar 'The Other Side of Psychoanalysis', another interpretation of Exod. 3.14a would certainly also be conceivable. The divine statement might also be understood as a description of the function of a 'master signifier'. In this case a term is equated with itself in an imaginary way. In a word play of Lacan: *maître* is

m'être (à moi-même), 'a master is being-me / belonging to myself' (S 17: 20 May 1970 / 2007, p. 178 [F]). An ego (French: *moi*), relying on mirror identifications, is posited, with the air of remaining itself (continuity) and determining itself (autonomy).

In the same seminar Lacan designates, as already indicated above, the divine statement as a 'tautology' (S 17: 21 January 1970 / 2007, p. 74 [F]). Nevertheless, he does not relate this to his concept of the master signifier. The reason is presumably his understanding of the statement 'I am what I am' as evasive. It is noteworthy, however, that later in this seminar he connects Yhwh with the master's discourse. According to him, we can argue in the footsteps of the prophet Hosea that mixing up supernatural agencies with nature itself was based on nothing, 'because there was Yahweh, and because [with him] a certain discourse was inaugurated . . . , namely the master's discourse' (S 17: 15 April 1970 / 2007, p. 158 [F]).

In his talk '*Sum*, I am', the British psychoanalyst David Winnicott relates Exod. 3.14a to the emergence in history of the concept of individuality.[19] Such a view is closely connected with the interpretation of the divine statement as the affirmation of God's identity with himself. This kind of interpretation is often found among theologians. Karl Barth first understood the statement as a refusal and read it in terms of revelation and remaining hidden.[20] Later, however, he related it to the traditional concept of 'aseity' (lit., '[being] by itself') explained by him as freedom (and this with authenticity: 'not ceas[ing] to be himself').[21] In a more traditional way this concept of aseity also obviously plays a part in Althusser's paraphrase of the divine statement: according to him, God defines himself in it as 'the Subject par excellence, the one who is by himself and for himself'.[22] This way of interpreting it is promoted by the usual translation 'I am who I am', according to which God only refers back to himself (see Chapter 5, sec. 5, conclusion 4.c). Considered from the context of the statement, this interpretation concerns at most an implication, a secondary aspect of Exod. 3.14a.

From a Lacanian viewpoint different ways of interpretation were distinguished in this section. The divine statement in Exod. 3.14a can be inter-

19. D.W. Winnicott, '*Sum*, I am' (orig. 1968), in Winnicott, *Home Is Where We Start from: Essays by a Psychoanalyst* (ed. C. Winnicott *et al.*; New York: Norton, 1986), pp. 55-64, esp. 57.

20. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1. *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; London: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 1975 [orig. German 1932]), pp. 317-18, 322.

21. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.1. *The Doctrine of God* (trans. H. Knight and J.L.M. Haire *et al.*; London: T. & T. Clark, 1957 [orig. German 1940]), pp. 302, 492, 495-96.

22. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 167.

preted in line with a self-sufficient master-ego (*moi*) or with an elusive but also interruptive I (*je*), which is closely connected with a fundamental lack. In my view, the distinction between these ways not only offers an entry into different aspects of Exod. 3.14 but also gives a clue to understanding the modern history of the interpretation and effects of this text (cf. Chapter 5, sec. 5, conclusion 4).

A psychoanalytically informed reader may have noticed that in the first section of this chapter the notion of the 'function of the third' was used but not that of *the Name-of-the-Father*. What was the reason for this absence? We are now better equipped for dealing with this question.

Regarding the call narrative, it is not a matter of course to connect God with the designation of 'father'. He is not called father there and does not clearly act like a father. These situations do occur in the Hebrew Bible but only rarely. In all probability this sporadic occurrence has to do with the horror of associating him with procreation (cf. Deut. 32.6), which would imply a second being besides him.[23] Nevertheless, there is a clear link between God and the notion of father in the call narrative: Yhwh is qualified as 'God of the fathers' (3.[6], 13, 15, 16; 4.5). The narrative also implies that we should distinguish the divine name from representations that are handed down about this 'God of the fathers' (3.14-15) (see Chapter 2, sec. 7, point 3). This very distinction will enable Moses to appeal to this divine name, in spite of the radically new nature of his commission. As such, as an agency of appeal among the 'Sons/Children of Israel' that goes beyond the 'fathers' and representations about their god handed down by them, the divine name can rightfully be called a 'Name-of-the-Father'.

Lacan indicates that he borrowed the term 'Name-of-the Father' from 'religion' (E 1, p. 556), that is to say, the Christian religion. This borrowing is certainly significant. To Lacan, religious and theological works are interesting because, in contrast with many contemporary discourses, the subject is clearly situated there in the field of the Other.[24] At the same time this borrowing should not be misunderstood—as if the sense of this technical term could be derived from this origin and Lacan does not use the term in a particular way. This particular use varies from the description of its function as third term in the Oedipal constellation to that as 'sinthome', which knots the registers of the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary together.

The obvious utility of the concept notwithstanding, we should take into account differing epistemological conditions.[25] The disadvantage of the term is that, at least outside psychoanalytical discourse, it also evokes patriarchal connotations. Its application would therefore intensify the patriarchal aspect already inherent in

23. Personal communication by Karel A. Deurloo, 1996; cf. his contribution in Jeanette Deenik-Moolhuizen *et al.*, *Belijden is doen: De apostolische geloofsbelijdenis uitgelegd tegen bijbelse achtergrond* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1980), p. 21.

24. Antonio Di Ciacca, 'Théologie et psychanalyse', *Quarto* 52 (1993), pp. 85-92, esp. 88.

25. Cf. Dany Nobus, 'Over toegepaste en andere psychoanalyse', *Rondzendbrief uit het Freudiaanse Veld* 11.52 (1992), pp. 53-58, esp. 58.

the biblical text. The meaning of a text such as the narrative of the call of Moses reaches, however, in principle beyond this aspect; this feature should caution us in the use of the term Name-of-the-Father. Therefore, this chapter will only refer to the function of third term as such or speak about it as 'sinthome-Name'.

4. *The Miraculous Phenomena and the Real*

The relationship between the Israelites and God is described in a remarkable way in the prologue to the call narrative. The Israelites 'groaned from the servitude' and 'cried out', and 'their appeal-for-help rose up to God, from the servitude' (2.23). If we read backwards, it is striking that the crying of the Israelites is not directed to anyone. Apparently there is no address and no expectation. In other words, the Israelites miss a name that embodies hope in their unbearable situation and would make them pray. When the cry for help nevertheless comes to God, it is because it is following its own way and so exceeds the imagination of the Israelites.

From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, we are touching here on the register of the Real. The Real is a limit-concept (*Grenzbegriff*), thus on the border of what can be expressed. The category has its origin in the clinical experience that not everything can be grasped fully in terms of the Symbolic. (By contrast, the term 'reality' is reserved by Lacanians for what has been embedded in the Symbolic.) Although the human subject lives in a universe of language, not everything is enclosed in that world. What cannot be included has nevertheless to be represented in that world, but this can take place only in the form of what does not fit. It manifests itself most clearly as the unimaginable, the thoroughly non-meaningful, the uncanny, the traumatic, as anxiety.[26] Consisting of what is inassimilable to the Symbolic, the Real is a category relative to the former category and is therefore connected with different phenomena such as traumatic experience, death, the anatomic basis of sexual difference, drives (*Triebe*), and the like. These are only general remarks; they should not conceal that the manifestations of the Real may differ more or less from one particular subject to another.

In the text the hardships of slavery and its expression by crying are at first not embedded in a particular perspective, seen from the Israelites' point of view, and therefore deprived of any sense. This indicates their 'real' dimension. Only subsequently, in the development of the story, do they become linked to God.

26. Cf. Martine Lerude, s.v. 'Real, The (Lacan)', in Mijolla, *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (see n. 18), III, pp. 1453-54.

According to the main part of the call narrative, it is in the burning bush that Yhwh appears to Moses (Exod. 3.2-4). This is often interpreted in a so-called symbolic way, whether or not within a psychoanalytical frame of reference. It would indicate, for instance, that the violence of Egypt rages against the Israelites like a mighty fire, but it will not be able to destroy them. Already Philo and the Midrash reasoned along such lines.[27] The comparison of Egypt with an iron furnace elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Deut. 4.20; 1 Kgs 8.51) is an argument in favour of this interpretation, but, unfortunately the only one. The German priest and psychotherapist Eugen Drewermann describes, rightly in my view, the burning bush as an opening symbol, something characteristic for the whole narrative. He identifies the 'bush' further as a 'thorn bush', and in his 'depth-psychological' interpretation this serves as a symbol of futility (*Nichtigkeit*), one depicting how Moses experiences himself in relation to God.[28] His reference in this connection to the fable of Jotham (Judg. 9.7-15), however, is baseless, because in that story a different word is used: *'āṭād* and not *s^{e}ne*. The latter word probably does not mean thorn bush but 'bramble'.[29] It is noteworthy in this connection that in the Hebrew Bible the word occurs further only in the blessing of Moses, and there it appears in a context of fertility (Deut. 33.16).[30] As for the call narrative, through a similarity of sound the word *s^{e}ne*, which is used five times in 3.2-4, presumably alludes to Sinai, the well-known place of revelation (Exodus 19-20; see Chapter 1, sec. 5).

In itself the method of the 'symbolic' interpretation mentioned above, looking for regular associations of the words involved, is not wrong. It could be argued that in the case concerned the conclusions are not founded enough. The problem, however, is in particular that the method is used to

27. *Mos* I.67-70; and *Midrash Rabbah*, *ad loc*., respectively.

28. Eugen Drewermann, *Tiefenpsychologie und Exegese*, II (Olten: Walter, 1985), p. 380.

29. See Jehuda Feliks, s.v. 'Burning bush', *Encyclopaedia judaica*, IV (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), pp. 1528-30 (referring to the rabbinical tradition) (= vol. IV, 2nd edn, 2007, pp. 297-98). Similarly, in connection with the LXX translation of *s^{e}ne* by *batos*: Max C.P. Schmidt, s.v. 'Brombeerstrauch', in Georg Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, III (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1899), pp. 887-88; and 'Dornstrauch', in Wissowa, *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, V (1905), p. 1568. Differently, Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 140-41: he refers to the Arab *sene*, a low shrub, because this would more fit the landscape of Sinai. However, cognate names can be used for different plants. Further, the mention of just this plant may have other, in particular acoustic, reasons (see the continuation of the main text).

30. This also applies to the account of Josephus; see *Jewish Antiquities* 2.264-66.

reason away the fundamentally strange, incomprehensible nature of the burning of the bush.

From a comparative point of view, it may be noted that also in other oriental stories gods manifest themselves in fire and/or trees.[31] In this connection the statement of Lacan is noteworthy that 'the gods are a mode of revelation of the Real' ('*Les dieux, c'est un mode de révélation du réel*'; S 8: 30 November 1959), or in other terms: 'the gods belong to the Real' ('*les dieux sont du réel*'; S 8: 21 December 1960). In the original context the plural 'gods' relates in particular to the Greek gods. Lacan's connection of the gods with 'the real' has in all probability been provocative to his 'enlightened' audience, but it also intends to mark the qualitative difference in the way an ancient Greek experienced reality in comparison to his listeners. In this world Eros, 'love', could be called a great god because of its enigmatic and scandalous nature; and Socrates could talk with his *daimōn* as a spiritual force independent of him. Apparently we have to understand our story in a context similar to that of Greek myth: Yhwh appears first of all as god among the gods.

Interestingly, Lacan expresses himself more specifically about the phenomenon of the burning bush. He designates it as 'the Thing of Moses' (S 7: 16 March 1960 / 1992, p. 174). The notion of 'the Thing' concerns something that is beyond the signified but around which the representations of the subject circle (see, e.g., S 7: 9 and 16 December 1959 / 1992, pp. 54, 57). It is a kind of imaginary investment in a local, limited manifestation of the Real. It may be added that the different subjective effects of the Thing as described by Lacan can be epitomized strikingly well by the characterization of the holy as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* by Rudolf Otto.[32]

According to Drewermann, Moses gets at the bush the 'archetypical experience' that wishing to see God is preceded by being seen by him. This interpretation in the sense of being safely included in a larger whole seems to be characteristic of the religious views of Drewermann. However, the development of the bush scene indicates a concern that is different from his view. At first Moses' gaze is captured by the strange aspect of the burning (3.3; therefore, not by the wish to see God). He approaches it, but is then stopped by a voice from the bush (3.4-5). When the voice identifies himself as the God of the ancestors, Moses becomes afraid to look at him. Just after

31. In relation to the latter item see M.A. Beek, 'Der Dornbusch als Wohnsitz Gottes (Deut. xxxiii 16)', *OTS* 14 (1965), pp. 155-61 (discussion of the background of Deut. 33.16); Feliks, 'Burning bush', p. 1528.

32. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (trans. J.W. Harvey; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2nd English edn, 1950 [orig. German 1917]), esp. Chapters 4 and 6.

Moses has barred his gaze by concealing his face, the voice of God goes on and strikingly starts by telling what he has *seen* (3.7)! What matters in any case is that the gaze of Moses is clearly disturbed by the voice of the Other; in fact, he is shifted from seeing to listening.

The preceding description of the different aspects of seeing in relation to the Other and his speaking is inspired by Lacan's description of the gaze (*le regard*), the reversals of the drive and notably the scopic drive and the position of the voice in the 'Four Fundamental Concepts' (S 11). Nevertheless, this does not result in detecting any known pattern in the text. It should be noted that psychoanalytical theory can also function in this way when reading a text.

According to 4.1-9, Moses is given three signs to convince the Israelites that Yhwh really appeared to him. The first is the temporary change of Moses' staff into a snake. In my view, to grasp the significance of this event, we should situate it in a larger context.

The staff (*maṭṭe*) plays a central role in the struggle with Pharaoh to get the Israelites released. After the plagues narrative, its occurrence in the Hebrew Bible is quite limited (see Exod. 17.5, 9; Num. 20.8-9, 11; cf. Numbers 17). In the first part of Exodus it functions as a kind of magic wand to bring disasters upon the Egyptians. Magic practices were rather common in the ancient world, but the concentration of magic-like practices in this part of the Bible and the unusual nature of the first and third signs and of some plagues, which involve a transformation of nature, are presumably indications of an allusion to the Egyptian context.[33] This is also suggested by the fact that in the story not only Aaron but also Pharaoh's magicians are able to transform their staff into a monster-snake (*tannîn,* 7.12) during the second confrontation of Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh. They too manage to bring about the miracles of the first plagues. Nevertheless, that the snake–staff refers to something specific in the Egyptian context is not as certain as some writers think.[34] It should also be noted that, although somewhat reminiscent of magical practices, the way of execution of the signs and plagues is in fact very different from them: they do not take place by tricks such as incantation to manipulate divine powers but by actions ordered by God.[35]

33. Cf. Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (HBI; New York: Behrhouse, 1967), p. 98 (referring to Y. Kauffmann).

34. See, e.g., John D. Currid, 'The Egyptian Setting of the "Serpent": Confrontation in Exodus 7,8-13', *Biblische Zeitschrift* 39 (1995), pp. 203-24. He connects Exod. 7.8-13 directly with the snake as emblem of the Egyptian king and magical practices in relation to snakes.

35. Cf. Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1986), pp. 58-59.

There are a few indications that the narrator presupposes some knowledge of the role of the staff by the reader. At the end of the call narrative Moses is told, 'Take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs' (4.17). It is a little surprising that Moses has to take the staff in his hand—as if it were not already there (see 4.4, but cf. 4.6-7)—but it is even more striking that he should now perform all the signs through it, although up to this moment only the first sign was executed with it. It seems that the narrator was already thinking about the function of the staff during the plagues. What is even more significant is that in the epilogue of the call narrative, when Moses leaves for Egypt and takes the staff with him, the staff is all of a sudden called 'the staff of God' (4.20; the same designation is used again in 17.9).

Against the background of the previous paragraphs, it is not surprising that the snake–staff has been interpreted as a phallic symbol,[36] that is, as symbol of potency. However, one should not take this as something self-evident but at least have an eye for the rather complex way in which this symbol functions. In this connection the way the staff is introduced in 4.2-5 is significant. We do not read about a solemn handing over from Yhwh to Moses (but later the verse just discussed, 4.17, may suggest this). At the beginning of the passage, the staff is put at the forefront by the question by Yhwh, 'What [is] that in your hand?', after which Moses mentions it in response (4.2). When Moses has subsequently thrown it down as ordered, it is changed into a snake and Moses then runs away from it. Without doubt Moses' flight points to the real nature of the change, but it is also not very flattering for Moses, to say the least. In fact, this stage exposes Moses' vulnerability and impotence. The other side is that in this way Yhwh is presented as the real cause of the happening. (Strikingly enough, the latter's position is also emphasized during the last appearance of the staff, in Numbers 20, but in another way: Moses' use of it as a magic wand instead of only as a symbol leads to his punishment by Yhwh.) When by order Moses seizes the snake, it becomes a staff again. It may be said to have acquired then an added meaning: it has become 'the staff that was changed into a snake' (7.15).

Already within the call narrative, the function of the sign is, however, defined by Yhwh: it is given 'so that they [the people] may trust that Yhwh, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared to you'. The underlying thought seems to be that the extraordinary nature of the changes points to a divine origin and by this it confirms the divine provenance of Moses' words (see also Chapter 1, sec.

36. Ilona N. Rashkow, 'Oedipus Wrecks: Moses and God's Rod', in A. Brenner (ed.), *Exodus to Deuteronomy* (A Feminist Companion to the Bible, Second Series; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 59-74, esp. pp. 64-65.

1). Nevertheless, the narrative considers the possibility that the Israelites will not believe. After the second sign (Moses' hand gets *ṣāra'at*, commonly but not very adequately translated with 'leprosy', 4.6-7),[37] the text says: 'it shall be, if they do not trust you, and do not hearken to the voice of the former sign, then they will put their trust in the voice of the second sign' (4.8). In case they still do not have confidence, yet a third sign is announced (the change of Nile water into blood). The function of the signs is therefore in the end dependent on the trust that the Israelites put in Moses. It is they who have to attribute to the events the meaning as described.

The last paragraph indicates a difference between 3.2-4 and 4.2-9 as a whole. The continuously burning bush is a kind of surplus in relation to reality. It concerns only a lack inasmuch as it cannot be interpreted. In this connection the words of Yhwh have only a prohibiting, limiting function. By contrast, in 4.2-9 the strange aspect is confined to momentary changes of nature. Yhwh's words now interpret the function of the changes and thus embed them in the Symbolic.

In the present section the *notion of 'phallus'* has been used. The Lacanian concept 'phallus' is a controversial one because it raises the question whether and how far this concept, even in the latest stages of its development, reflects a social formation marked by male dominance.[38] The reader may allow me to write a short *apologia* for its use here. Not all the aspects of the problem can be discussed here, not to speak about solving this; but some clarification of the concept of phallus will be of value in this connection.[39]

Lacan introduced the word phallus in psychoanalytical theory to distinguish the symbolic function of the penis from its function as anatomical organ. In his theorization in the 1950s the phallus is strongly tied to the image of the penis; its function is described, however, in terms of a signifier (e.g. E 1, p. 543, 552-55, 557 [F]). It

37. The rendering is adequate inasmuch as it provokes horror and the idea of social exclusion; however, it does not agree with the medical entity leprosy or Hansen's disease. See John J. Pilch, 'Biblical Leprosy and Body Symbolism', *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 11 (1981), pp. 108-13; E.V. Hulse, 'The Nature of Biblical "Leprosy" and the Use of Alternative Medical Terms in Modern Translations of the Bible', *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 107 (1975), pp. 87-105, esp. 91.

38. Cf., e.g., Daniel Boyarin, 'On the History of the Early Phallus', in S. Farmer and C. Braun Pasternak (eds.), *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages* (Medieval Cultures, 32; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 3-44 (this essay continues criticism from a feminist point of view but on a new level by pointing to the Phallus as 'the disembodied idealization of the penis' and suggesting that exactly the split between Phallus and penis supports male domination).

39. The *JLS* version of this chapter (see n. 1) tried to get around this problem by speaking only of symbolic lack and of a 'prosthetic signifier' (pp. 88-89). Dissatisfaction with the results has led me now to link myself more closely with Lacan's own formulations about the phallus.

functions first of all in the context of an interrogation by children of what the mother desires (beyond themselves). In this context the phallus appears to function as a structural point with two aspects: it embodies that which the first Other would lack and with which the child identifies at the same time. This founds the pivotal position of the phallus: on the one hand it introduces a fundamental lack in the Imaginary (-φ), beyond the dyadic relation with the mother; but on the other it symbolizes this lack (Φ), representing the fundamental lack within the Symbolic (the fact that it cannot found itself). It is important to note what such formalization in fact implies: the phallus may be represented by anything for which one would be appreciated or feared.[40] It may now be obvious that the concept of phallus has been developed by Lacan with reference to rather particular socio-historical circumstances but that within these specific circumstances more general, formal features have come to the forefront. In my view, the debate about this concept is caused partly by not distinguishing enough between these different aspects. In general it seems preferable to employ the adjective phallic instead of the noun phallus to indicate the functional, 'non-substantival' nature of what is concerned.

The present chapter focuses on what the text says on its own terms; in this line of approach psychoanalytical concepts can play only a subservient role. In the preceding text the following formal aspects of the phallic function as described by Lacan were used:

- the phallic function as tied to an extraneous element (the 'primordial father') that is supposed to guarantee its functioning (as can be inferred from the sexuation formulas in the seminar 'Encore');
- the phallic function as finally being a matter of lack (one does not possess it inherently);
- the phallic function as an issue of attribution.

To see the matter in the correct perspective, it is also important to note the contranature of the snake–staff in the text: it has a phallic aspect indeed, but this serves to undermine the (phallic) authority and power of Pharaoh.

5. *The Word 'God' Used as Metaphor*

From the sequence about the sending of Moses (3.7-12; see sec. 2) the intention is clear that Moses will go and represent Yhwh. This representation is considered in detail in the final part of the call narrative. Moses first indicates that he would like to be passed over with regard to the mission (4.13, quoted above in sec. 6b). Then Yhwh attaches Aaron to Moses (4.14). His description of their relationship culminates in a statement expressed in parallel language: 'he, he will be for (*l*^{e}) you as (*l*^{e}) (a) mouth, and you, you

40. Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading* Écrits *Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), pp. 136-37, among other things: 'The phallus, in Lacan's lexicon, the symbolic phallus, is what is socially valued, valorized, desired.'

will be for (*l*^{e}) him as (*l*^{e}) (a) god' (4.16b). The word 'mouth' is obviously a metaphor here; the remarkable use of the word 'god' for Moses should be understood accordingly.

There are many understandings of metaphor. The question is how it should be interpreted here. According to the classical conception, going back to Aristotle, a metaphor concerns a substitution for embellishing speech. In order to interpret it correctly, the original term should be recovered. Reasoning along these lines, it could be stated that 'mouth' is substituted for spokesperson; 'god' for leader.[41] This view, however, is an impoverishment with regard to what these metaphors actually express.

In Lacan's view, a metaphor is a creative signifying process based on substitution (E 1, pp. 506-8 [F]). What does that mean exactly? Should we now look at Exod. 4.16 again for the original signifier, the one that has been substituted? In general, Lacan's reflections about metaphor seem to suggest this. He says, for instance, that the signifier substituted remains present through a metonymic connection (ibid., p. 507). However, how can we find out what signifier is the original one in, for example, Exod. 4.16? Is this not guesswork? It may be supposed then that this view confuses the final extension of the signifying process with its starting point.

The simple conception of metaphorical substitution is in fact the source of much controversy about Lacan's notion of metaphor.[42] The references of his theorization, however, offer a starting point for another understanding. Lacan borrows the term substitution, together with that of combination, from the linguistic theory of Roman Jakobson.[43] In this theory, these two constitute the very basic language axes. The contrast with combination implies for substitution that in this case there is no pre-existing relationship between the substituting signifier and neighbouring signifiers in the signifier chain. Viewed in this way, substitution does not necessarily involve an unusual word taking the place of a specific word, but it implies more generally that a certain word replaces words that are usual at that place. More abstractly speaking, substitution concerns the implantation of one term from one language field in a statement belonging into another field.

41. Cf. the interpretation of Rashi in his Torah commentary.

42. See Russell Grigg, 'Metaphor and Metonymy', *Pre/Text* 15.1-2 (1994), pp. 26-45; Alain Costes, *Lacan: le fourvoiement linguistique—La métaphore introuvable* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003); Agnès Aflalo, 'Booz endormi' et Lacan réveillé', *Ornicar?* 51 (2004), pp. 213-58; Philippe Schepens, 'La gerbe de Booz', *Marges linguistiques* (online journal) 8 (2004), pp. 114-31.

43. Roman Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances', in Jakobson and M. Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 53-82, esp. 60.

These remarks are only preliminary statements about metaphor. A more direct point of departure for investigating the text is provided by the rule that a metaphor should always be understood in its context. In the text, 'he, he shall be for you as (a) mouth' is in line with 'he shall speak for you to the people' (Exod. 4.16a); and 'you, you shall be for him as (a) god' with 'you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth' (4.15a). What, then, do the metaphors add to the preceding sentences? Because of these sentences and the designation elsewhere of the prophet as the mouth of God (Jer. 15.19), it can be stated that we are dealing here with an 'extended metaphor': the words concerned describe the relationship between Moses and Aaron in terms of the relationship between God and prophet. The *effect* of this extended metaphor, then, is that it emphasizes the *leading* role of Moses in relation to Aaron and it does so in the most absolute terms. The reason for this emphasis is not obvious within the story itself. It becomes more understandable on another communicative level.[44] In the text Yhwh promises to 'instruct' (*yrh*) Moses what he should speak (4.12; cf. 4.15). Presumably, this alludes to the giving of the Torah by Yhwh through Moses, as is narrated later in Exodus 19-24. For Torah means 'instruction', although it is traditionally (after the example of the Septuagint) translated by 'law'. On the other hand, the introduction of Aaron as 'Levitical brother' (4.14; see Chapter 1, sec. 5) and as spokesman of Moses hints in all probability at the function of the Levites as interpreters of this *Torah.* An illustration of the situation alluded to is provided by Neh. 8.1-12: the Torah of Moses is read to the people and then explained to them by the Levites. This text may actually reflect the original social setting, the *Sitz im Leben,* of Exod. 4.15-16 rather directly. The depiction of the relationship by the metaphoric addition of 4.16 becomes therefore more understandable on the level of communication between author and reader.

However, something more can and should be said. It is important that Moses does not speak some indefinite words but the words of Yhwh. In this context the word 'god' indicates that Moses should be understood as a substitute for God, in a sense his embodiment. Also in four other places in the Hebrew Bible, the use of the word 'god' in reference to people indicates their position as representative of Yhwh.[45] In these cases we are dealing, therefore, with representation, by which certain aspects are transferred. Viewed in this way, the metaphor ends in a metonymical process in which new combinations and connections are created. For Exod. 4.16 this implies that what Moses and the Torah are saying should be taken by Aaron and the Levites as the word of God himself.

44. For the distinction between the different communicative levels, see Chapter 2, sec. 3.

45. See 1 Sam. 28.13; Isa. 9.5; Pss. 45.7; 58.2; cf. Zech. 12.8.

6. *Yhwh as a Subject Metaphor*

Many authors have noted that most words used to describe God and his acts (or gods and their actions) are borrowed from the form and behaviour of human beings, and that these can therefore be called metaphors.[46] In line with this, the words relating to Yhwh in the narrative of the call of Moses are used for human beings there and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

This phenomenon in the Bible has drawn attention since antiquity. This occurs, however, especially in particular cases; in the call narrative, for instance, at Yhwh's 'coming down' (3.8), the 'stretching out' of his hand (3.20) and the flaring up of his anger (4.14). These descriptions have a clear spatial or bodily aspect, and it is in this regard that exegetes and theologians speak of anthropomorphic language (cf. Chapter 4, sec. 3b). The term 'anthropomorphic' is often linked with the view that the words are not used in a proper, adequate way, and consequently it usually has a derogatory sense.

We may wonder whether the words used in connection with Yhwh are not modelled on a more specific category of human being. Many of the words used in the call story would well suit the description of a king, if not a super king. However, this royal image is evoked especially by the fact that Yhwh is depicted in contrast to Pharaoh. There are no specific words in this sense. Only 'calling to mind of the covenant' (2.24) and words that signify a power relationship—'sending' and 'taking account of' (*pqd*, 3.16)—go in this direction.

To really pursue the matter, we may raise the question of what precisely distinguishes Yhwh from another character in the narrative such as Moses. Some words and descriptions put Yhwh in a more or less exclusive position. A word describing him is sometimes used in an unusual combination; for instance, the word *śîm*, 'lay' or 'make', in connection with 'mouth' (4.11). The word *niplā'ôt*, 'wonderful acts' (3.20), is even intrinsically linked to the divine in the Hebrew Bible.[47] The word *'elōhîm*, 'god', is, of course, in principle exclusive, although even the call narrative makes precisely this rather contingent, as pointed out in the previous section. In the narrative the exclusive position of Yhwh is especially hinted at by the high, heavenly place in which he is suggested to be originally (2.23, 'their appeal-for-help rose up to God'; 3.8, 'I have come down to rescue him'), the 'holy ground' that is connected with his appearance (3.5), and the miraculous phenomena that are related to his revelation (3.2-4; 4.2-9). Their function is comparable

46. See, e.g., Lieven Boeve and Kurt Feyaerts (eds.), *Metaphor and God-Talk* (Bern: Lang, 1999).

47. J. Conrad, s.v. *pl'*, in *TDOT*, XI, esp. pp. 540-43 (*niplā'ôt*).

to that of 'qualifiers' such as 'eternal' and 'infinite' in theology.[48] They indicate that the human words used for Yhwh function in an unusual way. This is ultimately the reason that these words may be called metaphors.

Taken together, these words in relation to God constitute, in fact, one extended metaphor. With regard to its function, we can speak of a 'subject metaphor'; it calls to mind the figure of a certain subject.[49] In this connection it is characteristic that the use of the pronoun of the first person and that of corresponding (preformative or afformative) forms of verbs hold a prominent position in the text. Moreover, even the proper name in question is related to the person characteristics of verb forms (3.14-15).

The creative effect of this subject metaphor has in fact already been dealt with, but will be explicitly noted in the following general conclusions.

7. *Final Considerations*

The present chapter has become not only an investigation of the function of Yhwh-God in the narrative of the call of Moses but also an inquiry into the role that psychoanalytical, Lacanian concepts and conceptions can play in the analysis of a story such as this. First, some general conclusions will be inferred from this 'hermeneutical' investigation. These are more or less formulated in contrast with other existing psychoanalytical readings.

(1) A psychoanalytical reading does not provide a complete reading of a text but is in principle fragmentary because such a reading is dependent on points of contact between the story and psychoanalytical theory. Points of departure of this reading are especially the peculiarities and transitions in the text that throw light on the subjective relationships in it. In this way the suggestion of a relation between Exod. 2.11-15 and 2.23-4.17 on the basis of their initial words led to an investigation of the (changing) relationship of Moses to himself and others.

(2) A distinction can be made between primarily psychoanalytically orientated investigations and primarily literarily orientated investigations of narratives and other literary texts. The former analyses take place with a

48. On the latter issue, see Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases* (London: SCM Press, 1982 [orig. 1957]), esp. pp. 61-80.

49. Lacan himself speaks of 'the metaphor of the [!] subject' (*la métaphore* du *sujet*) in different ways (the last element of the phrase functions as an objective modifier: S 5: 19 March 1958; or as a—seemingly—subjective one: E 1, p. 889 [F]) but always in a sense different from the concept 'subject metaphor' used in the main text of this chapter. It may be noted that this concept can narrow the interpretive gap between the notions of subject and the Other as a place at Exod. 3.14a. Cf. also next section, point 7.

view to understand better what happens in the psychoanalytical cure. On the other hand, the latter studies want to find out what the text has to say by itself, from its own perspective, by setting out from the way it is formulated. In the first case, verification and development of psychoanalytical conceptions are intended.[50] Then the text has a subordinate function; relationships in the text can be used for no other reason than some analogy. In the second case, within a primarily literary investigation, psychoanalytical conceptions have only a supporting role. The preceding investigation indicates that, in particular, the formal aspects of concepts of Lacan are useful in this respect.

The contrast between the two approaches, however, is not absolute. A careful literary reading can require the adjustment of a theoretical conception employed. In this way, the study of the metaphorical use of the word 'god' in the call narrative brought about a modification of Lacan's conception of metaphor. In a metaphor, metonymy is not the means by which a signifier substituted remains present, but the process in which the substitution–implantation of a certain signifier actually ends.

(3) A psychoanalytical reading may consist of connecting elements in the text with psychoanalytical terms in a metonymical way; for instance, the interpretation of the snake–staff as a phallic symbol of potency. In this case psychoanalysis functions as a master's discourse, which would bring to light the truth of a text and in fact is itself considered the final truth. This way of reading means a reduction of the text, and as a method it resembles allegorical interpretation. This chapter advocates another approach, which is rather similar to metaphorical substitution. To a certain extent, every interpretation replaces signifiers of the text with other signifiers. In the case of well-established, pre-given terms such as psychoanalytical ones, this may raise subsequently the question how far this makes sense, like a metaphor would do. This results in a comparison. For instance, a comparison of the snake–staff with the concept of the phallus leads to a closer investigation how the snake–staff precisely functions in the text. The merit of a psychoanalytical reading is, in the end, to bring to light new possibilities of understanding a text.

(4) Psychoanalytical readings are often regarded as leading to wild, so-called symbolic interpretations. There is reason for this reputation, but the preceding investigation has also indicated that certain concepts of Lacan, especially those related to the category of the Real, call into question such interpretations. Therefore, at least in this respect, a Lacanian reading may guard us from a *furor interpretandi*.

50. Michaux, 'Psychanalyse et art', p. 4.

We arrive now at the heart of the investigation of this chapter: the function of Yhwh-God in the narrative of the call of Moses. It seems that his reintroduction in the story in connection with particular circumstances reveals more or less his conditions of existence. The following conclusions can be drawn.

(5) Linguistically speaking, the figure of Yhwh concerns a subject metaphor. Metaphor does not mean here an improper use of words but a way of speaking that throws a new light on something; in the case of this subject metaphor, it puts the entire reality in the context of the subject figure called forth. The notion of a subject is generated by a proper name, personal pronouns, finite forms of verbs, and anthropomorphic terms. The proper name has a pivotal function in this generation; it is this name that calls forth the notion of a specific referent and in this way it also distinguishes the subject figure from other subjects mentioned.[51]

In the call narrative the figure of Yhwh functions first of all in opposition to Pharaoh. It is significant that serving God (3.12) is mentioned as well as serving Pharaoh (2.23). It is an indication that the introduction of Yhwh-God in the story involves a change of the symbolic situation. However, in the text Yhwh-God is opposed not only to Pharaoh but implicitly also to what has been said and thought about himself until then (3.13-14). According to these sayings and thoughts he would apparently be of no consequence in the current situation; in any case he could not take new initiatives appropriate to this situation such as sending Moses. This circumstance leads to a very fundamental reinterpretation of traditional data; in particular the reinterpretation of the divine name, Yhwh, by deriving it from *'Ehye*, a first-person verb form. This emphasizes the pivotal role played by the divine name in coping with the new situation.

(6) The divine name establishes itself at the place of a gap, a symbolic lack; the Israelites do not know to whom they can appeal in their current misery, and Moses does not know what he can call upon to justify his mission to the Israelites. Moreover, in making his case God cannot refer to the existing tradition. The indefinite nature of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a ('I may be who I may be') indicates the irreducibility of what is at stake. With just this hole we touch upon the Real. The cause of the change

51. As for the former feature, cf. Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 153: 'the mere use of a name . . . assumes that it has a referent, though that referent may exist only in fiction or in people's beliefs.' Cf. also the conception of S.R. Kripke of names as 'rigid designators'; for a short description, see, e.g., Anderson, *Grammar of Names*, p. 155.

of the symbolic situation cannot finally be established. It has simply become into being.

The introduction of the subject metaphor and the symbolic change it involves marks the Real by a lack, something missing. The Real is no longer only the place of anxiety and brute violence, the violence of Pharaoh and his people, but also of promise: Yhwh will gain the upper hand in the future; he will subdue the forces of evil, Pharaoh and his accomplices. By the introduction of the subject metaphor, the Real also acquires, as it were, a human face.

(7) Lacan as well as others suggest that there is a big difference between the original meaning of the divine statement of Exod. 3.14a and its later metaphysical interpretation. The investigations of this book suggest at least an opposition between a stable, eternal being on the one hand and an unexpected, surprising event, the irruption of another I, on the other hand.

It may be added that discussions about God and his nature often have a dichotomy as point of departure: God is either fictive (God as simply a narrative figure) or he is real. The considerations given before (5 and 6) suggest that it is not all that simple. The introduction of the divine name involves a change in the nature of the Real or at least the relationship to it, which in the end undermines the position of someone like Pharaoh.

(8) It is this change in the conditions that makes it possible to rewrite the relationships in which Moses and the Israelites find themselves. The introduction of the subject metaphor and the contrast that it involves founds a new way of being subject: it challenges the subject to come forward and to break with old forms of imaginary capture. Moses is called to go and represent Yhwh, and in principle this enables him and his people to distance themselves from their mirroring in Pharaoh. The personal and anthropomorphic character of God is heavily discussed in theology (e.g. 'Can God not better be seen as a force or as animation?'), but has an essential function in this context. In dogmatic terms, the anthropomorphic of God can be said to aim at his 'incarnation'.[52] In this connection it is significant that at the end of the call narrative the word 'god' becomes a designation of function (4.16), the indication of a place that one can occupy in relation to others.

The subject metaphor creates therefore an empty place that calls for a place holder. In other words, the divine name and all that is connected with it appeals for representation and realization in the world.

52. After Kornelis H. Miskotte, *When the Gods Are Silent* (trans. J.W. Doberstein; New York: Harper & Row, 1967 [orig. Dutch 1956, with the subtitle, in translation, 'Concerning the Meaning of the Old Testament']), pp. 127-33.

Finally, it may be useful to make a remark about the relationship between a psychoanalytical reading and a theological reading of a narrative such as the story of the call of Moses.

(9) In the introduction to this chapter it was already suggested that a psychoanalytical reading suspends theological considerations. It is a functional reading that in the end may indicate the (or better a) secular meaning of the divine. It is useful to point finally to a difference between the perspective of psychoanalysis and the one that this story has on its own (its 'theological' perspective). Psychoanalytically speaking, one of the functions of the divine name is fastening the Real to the Symbolic (its function as sinthome-Name; see above, point 6), but this name does not succeed completely in doing this. That may be evident from the call narrative because it does not answer all questions. How, for instance, can such an evil power like the pharaonic rule emerge? Why did Yhwh intervene so late? Biblical narratives such as the story of the call of Moses are, however, pervaded by the confidence that Yhwh is the definitive Name. The future is supposed to be marked by this Name. In the end, therefore, a psychoanalytical Bible reading requires enduring the tension between both perspectives.

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Indexes

The indexes of biblical and other source texts are selective. In particular passages that are discussed are indicated. This also applies to the indexes of Hebrew and Greek words and that of concepts. By contrast, the index of authors is comprehensive.

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